THE ADVENTURES OF HAJJI BABA, OF ISPAHAN, IN ENGLAND.

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THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA.

CHAPTER I.

Hajji Baba describes the opening of parliament. —Of certain English customs, and of love at first sight.

ABOUT this time there seemed to be a great and universal stir among the English. Houses which had remained empty all of a sudden appeared to be inhabited. The streets, which we before thought abundantly populous, were now positively so thronged with people and carriages, that it was with difficulty one could pass; and the women began to run about, and to

knock at each others' doors in a manner quite strange to behold. The whole scene put us much in mind of the return of the shah, his court, and his camp, to Tehran, from his summer's campaign in the plains of Sultanieh.

We inquired the cause of all this, an received various reasons. We were told that the great council of the state was about to sit; and that, although the country had already more than one thousand and one volumes full of laws, yet that more were wanted. Some said, that the government squandered away too much money, and that less must be expended for the future. Others assured us that the council met to discuss an old question, upon which they had argued for these last hundred years, and upon which they were not further advanced than when they first began; and this was, whether seven million of their population should continue to be discontented and rebellious, or the contrary? We would not believe any one of these statements; for we

asked, does it stand to reason that a nation so powerful, so prosperous, and so abounding in riches, as this, could lay itself open to such unheard-of imputations? The ambassador determined to learn as much of the truth as possible, in order to transmit it at full length to the shah. 'How!' said he, 'we have only one book, to wit, the Koran, which contains all our law; and here,' said he, 'we find that camel-loads of books are not enough! If every *cazi* and *sheikh el Islam** in England, who, perchance, might be sent to dispense justice over the land, were to travel, they would require at least fifty camels to carry about their requisite knowledge. Then as to settling what the government is to spend, in the name of Allah, what may be the use of a king, if he has not unlimited command over his treasury? Our king of kings would cut off any body's ears, did he dare call into question the right of

* Titles given to Persian men of the law.

a sovereign not only over his own wealth, but over the property, ay, over the lives of all his subjects. The other question was past our comprehension; it related in some measure to religion. From what we heard, it was plain that Mahomedans would have but a sorry existence of it in England; for if her own subjects were not allowed to pray after their own fashion, what, in the name of the shah's beard, could we expect? If they are looked upon as dogs, we might be treated as dogs' uncles!'

Notwithstanding this extraordinary conduct of the English towards their king, it appears that he goes willingly every year in state, surrounded by all the majesty and magnificence of a crowned head, to open the deliberations of the council, and even to invite them to settle how much he ought to spend; how many ministers; what number of generals; how many troops; what quantities of ships; what ambassadors to maintain; in short, how many expenses of every description he

ought to incur. They even have the audacity, we were assured, to settle in what manner he ought to support his own wife. If one half of this were true, we concluded that we might as well believe the other half; and, in order to be convinced with his own eyes, the ambassador willingly accepted an invitation to be present at the ceremony of opening the council, which, from what we could learn, resembled in some measure the great *selam-i-aum*, the great prostration of the people before the shah in Persia, on the festival of the *No Rouz*.

The mehmandar informed the Mirza Firouz that the number of persons admitted to the shah's presence on this occasion was restricted to a certain few; and therefore it was proposed that neither I nor any of his Persian suite should be of the party. Accordingly we saw him depart, accompanied only by the mehmandar; but we determined to make our way to the scene of action, in order to observe the passage of

the royal procession. The whole city was in motion. Never before had we seen such an assemblage of infidels. We, a handful of true believers, looked indeed rather insignificant in the great mass; but we were proud of being such, and would not have given one hair of our beards for the millions of black hats that waved to and fro before us. We posted ourselves under a tree in a garden leading to the house of assembly. Several avenues bordered the road through which the king was to pass; and, in order to keep it clear, on each side were posted cavalry, mounted upon superb horses. For the time being we attracted more attention than any thing else, and were beginning to feel the insolence of the crowd, when luckily their attention was soon after diverted from us by the approach of the king, and we opened all our eyes to see his majesty pass. Before the procession had reached us about a *maidan*, we heard strange and unaccountable sounds, which we took for the English mode of paying

homage to their monarch; sounds which in some measure assimilated to the greetings made by the Arabian women upon the approach of a great personage. They were a mixture of cries, groans, and hisses. As the great coach in which the king sat drew near, the rush of the crowd was immense, and immediately there issued from the thousands that stood near us such a shower of hisses, that we felt sure that no king could be more beloved by his people than this. So much loyalty was instantaneous in its effect; it was as catching as fear; and, almost involuntarily, we added our most unaffected hisses to those of the surrounding crowd, the hue of our faces almost becoming black with the exertion. All the collected serpents of the plains of *Mogan** in a rage could not exceed the noise we made. We became the point of observation to all beholders. But what was our astonishment, I may add

* A tract of country near the river Araxes, famous for its numerous serpents.

consternation, when, instead of meeting with the encouragement and commendation we expected, we found ourselves, surrounded by a host of men, with short painted sticks in their hands, backed by some individuals of the cavalry, who most unceremoniously invited us to dislodge from our tree, and to walk away with them to places unknown!

'What do these men want?' exclaimed Mohamed Beg; 'what dirt do they eat?'

'Shall I give them a taste of the knife?' asked Aga Beg, the master of the horse.

'Use no violence, by your child's soul!' exclaimed I, 'or they will strike our stomachs, as they did Mohamed Beg's.'

The scene becoming much confused, we were about being very awkwardly situated, when a well-dressed Frank stepped up, and, seeing who we were, immediately interfered, and explained to the men with painted sticks, that whatever we might have done it must have been through ignorance. He released us from their superintendence; and

having kindly accompanied us to our home, we there explained all that had happened; and then to our confusion we found, that, instead of paying honour and respect to the shah of England, we had in fact been treating him worse than a dog. '*La illaha illallah!* There is but one God!' exclaimed Mohamed Beg. 'What a country is this! Who ever thought of abusing one's king to his face too! Let us leave this people; they are too bad. One never sees them pray; their wives are without shame; and they heap abomination upon their own king's head!'

'By my soul,' exclaimed Aga Beg, 'I thought that hissing was the Frank mode of doing honour. We have all made a feast of abomination!'

'But pray, sir,' said I to the gentleman who had escorted us home, 'tell me by what chance is it that the English people receive their king after this manner?'

'The popularity of our king,' said he, 'depends upon circumstances, which no

human power can control. The people are ignorant, and are led by designing demagogues. Bread is dear, they hiss the king; trade is dull, they hiss the king; they hate peace, they hiss the king; the queen behaves ill, they hiss the king. The following year, perhaps, bread is cheap and trade brisk, they cheer the king; his ships or his armies gain a victory, they smother him with kindness; his ministers make good speeches, and talk of reducing taxes, they will lay down their lives for him. Who can account,' said he, 'for popular favour, or popular disfavour? It is as uncertain as the wind that blows.'

'I tell you what, sir,' said I, taking hold of the tip of my beard, and holding it out to him, 'do you see this?'

'Yes,' answered he, 'I see it.'

'Well then, by this I swear, and I can swear by nothing more sacred, that if the people of Tehran, upon the presence of their shah, were even to spit in his presence, or to do any thing by look or speech

that indicated disrespect, he would order a *katl-i-aum*, a general massacre, to take place, and would not leave one rogue of them to look at the sun the next morning. By all the Imams, it is as true as I stand here.'

The gentleman at this speech opened his eyes with astonishment, and seeing perhaps how cheap we held other peoples' heads, he made us a low bow, and took his leave.

By this time the ambassador had returned, and when we had related to him and to the mehmandar the adventures of the morning, they consoled us by laughing at our beards, and said that, if we expected to find in the English mob the same servility which existed in the Persian, we were much mistaken. 'They are as different,' said they, 'as the dirty puddle in which a camel drinks is to the sea, which at one hour is agitated by a hurricane, at another lulled into a dead calm.'

Mohamed Beg answered, for his part,

that he would rather belong to the puddle, if what he had seen to-day and the day before, when he had been so mauled, were acts illustrative of the people of England.

The ambassador then described his adventures: Never had man seen so much in so short a space of time. A king on a throne; dresses of all descriptions; gold, silver, velvet; sticks, swords, and gold maces; men with extraordinary wigs sprinkled with dust; a multitude of *omrahs*, with scarlet and ermine cloaks; a rush of men, with a *kedkhoda*, covered with false hair, at their head; and to crown all, women! 'Oh such women!' said he, 'I was in love with them all; they were all unveiled; I saw much flesh whiter than snow; eyes that killed; and teeth which smiled delight!'

We had never before seen our ambassador in such a state. But there was one fair creature above the rest, of whose charms he raved; he had never conceived that any thing human could be so beautiful; his heart

was on fire. It was plain that this circumstance alone had reconciled him to a residence among the infidels; and now we learned to appreciate the truth of that saying of our immortal Sheikh, 'Be you seated in the most lonely shade of the valley of the angel of death, and let love be your companion, the desert will appear a paradise, and your wretchedness will seem beatitude.' He called her his *jalibelgeloob**; swore that the leaf of her eye † was more tender than that of the rose; that she was more brilliant than a moon fourteen days old ‡; and that she was in the very eyeball § of her age; in short, he made one believe that she was a very phœnix, 'The one of ones.'

* Ravisher of hearts.

† The eyelid.

‡ An eastern image for mistress.

§ Pinnacle.

CHAPTER II.

A dinner is given to the ambassador.—Of the precedence of women.—Of wine-drinking.

THERE seemed now to pervade one new and universal impulse throughout the city to congregate in a thousand different manners, for objects which to us were totally novel. The men sought the women, and the women received the men. In the morning they met at occasional visits to talk upon matters of little importance; then they congregated in troops on horseback, or in carriages; they then dispersed and separated into different companies to eat; and although by the time they had done this it was our time for going to bed, yet again they met in larger and more numerous assemblies, to dance, or to sit, or to be pressed together in masses in a manner difficult to explain. In this we

were told they followed their own pleasure; nor were these great meetings at all for the honour of their king, as our principal ones generally are, but purely for their own gratification. When we meet in large bodies it is usually to attend our shah; and although we do congregate and eat together occasionally, yet who ever thought of doing so in the unbounded manner of England?

The mehmandar came into the ambassador's room the day after his appearance at the house of parliament, and said, 'Here are five invitations to dinner to-day.' 'Allah, Allah!' exclaimed the ambassador, 'five invitations! who can eat five dinners in one day?'

'It is not necessary to eat them all,' answered the mehmandar; 'it is enough that you accept one. You eat one dinner, but you may go to as many evening assemblies afterwards as you please. Here is a whole handful of invitations.'

We remained perfectly astonished. 'Who

can go through such labour,' said we, 'and then live? We are Persians; we go to sleep when the last prayers have been chanted, and we awake with the dawn. How is this?'

'You will soon get accustomed to our manners,' said the mehmandar. 'We make little distinction between day and night at this season.'

Without more difficulty the ambassador, accompanied by the mehmandar and myself, went to the dinner in question, which was given by one of the viziers. He dressed himself in his best, putting on the cap of ceremony with the shawl round it, and girding himself with his diamond-hilted dagger. He had found it more convenient to adopt the shoes of the Franks (excepting on very great occasions, when he preserved our own high-heeled slippers,) because it was impossible for him to be always accompanied by his shoe-bearer. He intimated that I was to

accompany him, and accordingly I also made my person as fit to be seen as possible.

No one came to inform us that the entertainment was ready; no one said the *Bismillah!* but we went straight to the vizier's house; and we were announced by very loud knocks on a closed door, inflicted by strong servants. Other servants having appeared from within, we were invited to walk in. The ambassador's name was then called out at stated intervals, until we were ushered into the hall of meeting. Here, at the threshold, we were received by the vizier, who himself was walking about as well as most of his guests, for there appeared to be perfect liberty on that score. We then went to the vizier's wife, who seemed to be quite as much at home as her husband, and did her best by sweet smiles to make us welcome. There were several other khanums, very civil and handsome. If any portion of a veil had been thrown over them, to hide certain parts of their very

white persons, I should have been in a fever of love at once; but as it was, I scarcely thought of them as women. The conversation began by every person present appearing anxious to know whether we had seen the sun on that day; for it was ascertained that it had been seen, but whether for one hour, or only half an hour, there appeared to be some serious doubts. The ambassador, evidently tired at this constant allusion to our supposed worship of the sun, turned off the observation by a compliment to the vizier's wife. 'You do not want a sun in your country,' said he, 'when you have such suns as the khanum's eyes to give light and joy to the world!'

When this was interpreted, it produced a universal cry of approbation, and was immediately taken up, with the greatest good humour, by the vizier himself, who said, 'If his excellency is to be an apostate, and if he is to worship these suns, (pointing to the lady's eyes), instead of his

own, we must look about us. We must begin building harems, and manufacturing veils.'

Upon this, a great deal of agreeable joking took place, which animated the whole party, and indeed gave us an insight into the English character we had never before acquired. We, Persians, who are so fond of a good saying, were delighted to find that so much merriment could exist among persons who usually live in a fog; and the ambassador, who thought that there might be some etiquette among them as to who should lanch the first joke, seeing that they were in general so taciturn, willingly ventured to break the spell, and never lost an opportunity for the future of putting in his word whenever he could do so with propriety.

The entrance of a person with white dust on his head to invite us to the feast put an end for a time to the good humour that had broken out; and when the company stood up, we discovered that there existed among the English to

the full as much etiquette about precedence as in our country. But Allah! Allah! who, let me say, were the objects of it! Mohamed Beg, when I related the fact, would not believe it. Women!—they, the women, took precedence. They walked out of the room first, whilst the men seemed to struggle for the privilege of leading them forwards. Every honour was intended towards our ambassador; he was invited to make his way with the vizier's wife, his right hand placed in her left; and, considering that this was the first time he had performed such a ceremony, he really did it amazingly well. Without even thinking of washing our hands before we began to eat, both men and women proceeded to the scene of action. What we Mussulmans were to do with our left hands was always a subject of deep consideration; but in a country of infidels we took liberties that no other emergency could ever sanction.

We entered a large room, in the centre

of which was spread a table more curiously ornamented than any we had yet seen. Around this we placed ourselves, but not without much of the difficulty of etiquette. I avow that, saving our own beards, which looked out of character among the smooth chins that wagged round the board, I was delighted at the sight. 'Tis true that much more noise was heard than during one of our entertainments; for the unceasing activity of the servants with creaking shoes, the clash of plates, the ringing of glasses, the slashing and cutting with sharp instruments, and, above all, the universal talking of the assembly, created a din to which we were little accustomed, and which in Persia would be esteemed as highly indecorous*. But it was an enlivening sight; and excepting the absence of a Hafiz

* Persian servants in attendance at an entertainment are scarcely heard. They do their work without shoes; and as there is no handing of plates, and no changing of knives and forks, the quiet is great compared to the din of our tables.

to chant the luxuries of our wine, of the excellence of which even our blessed Prophet could have had no idea, the entertainment would have been perfect. Of what the numerous dishes were composed, I did not give myself the trouble to consider; and without pausing to inquire whether the mutton had properly bled, or whether the poultry had died the true death, I eat whatever came in my way. I certainly made one or two scrutinizing pauses at a new sort of flesh, and which I fancied might be that of the unclean beast; but 'in the name of Allah!' said I, 'what is the use of stickling about pollution, when we have now been steeped in it ever since we have lived among the infidel?' and so I ate of every thing that was offered to me. If Mohamed Beg had been with us, he would have been blowing over his shoulders during the whole of the entertainment. The ambassador seemed to be as much at his ease as any one of the most experienced eaters of a dinner among the English

themselves. He managed the spoons, knives, claws, and pincers, with surprising dexterity. I must own that I was not so fortunate, for I made one or two mistakes merely from the force of previous habit, which evidently had an unfavourable effect upon those around me. I shared my neighbour's bread, which is here looked upon as offensive as it is otherwise in Persia. I drank out of his glass; and once I presented a bit with my fingers from a dish before me, at which he made a start as if I had offered poison. Although we did not sit with our knees double, but were quite at our ease upon chairs, with legs pendant, yet the great length of the entertainment almost killed me. At length there was a general move, but to my astonishment, the women only took their departure. This was the nearest approach to our own customs which I had yet seen, and I asked my neighbour why this distinction was made? why the women alone went? He seemed puzzled for an explanation. 'Is it

thus ordained in your scriptures,' said I, 'or is it ordered by your king?' Still he was at a loss for an answer; and I concluded that this might be a custom borrowed from Islam. My neighbour hinted that the absence of the women left the men at greater liberty to talk and drink wine. 'Ah, then,' said I, 'you must have adopted that maxim of the East, which saith, 'first dinner, then conversation;' but if drinking be your object, this is not the way to set about it. Do as we do in Persia; get up betimes in the morning; go into a garden; seat yourself near a running stream; put flowers on your head; have songsters and nightingales; drink till your senses are gone; wait till they return; then drink again, and take no thought of time; let day and night be the same, until at length you have so completely soaked yourself with wine, that it is time to cry out, 'Enough! enough!''

Whether my neighbour understood my attempt to explain myself in English, I

know not, but he eyed me with astonishment.

At length the dinner was over, and with unwashed hands we proceeded to the room of assembly, where we found the vizier's wife and her khanums ready again to receive us.

CHAPTER III.

The ambassador goes to Almack's.—Hajji's observations on waltzing and quadrilling.—He scrutinizes an exquisite.

We had not long returned to the ladies, when the vizier's wife, who, by her agreeable manners, had fairly taken possession of the ambassador's beard, invited him to follow her to a place of general entertainment, of which she herself, as we understood her, was a sort of queen; and which we discovered from the mehmandar's interpretation was a meeting of all the principal mirzas, khans, and begs of the English nation, together with their wives and daughters. It was called Almack's; and here the ambassador and I were confirmed in an opinion which we had previously formed, that much of the English language was derived from the Persian and

Arabic. What could Almack's be but *al mags*? the marrow, the pith, that is, the cream of the English nobility. But we inquired, as we yawned with approaching drowsiness, 'What can induce the princes, mirzas, khans, their wives and daughters, to select this hour of the night for meeting? Is there no other opportunity in the twenty-four hours for the performance of this august ceremony?' 'Oh,' said the vizier's wife, 'there is no time for explanation now. You will soon see; and then your question will answer itself.'

The ambassador, with great good humour, did as he was desired; and although we were both of us dying with sleep, yet we proceeded in the train of the vizier's wife; the vizier himself and most of his guests following also.

Who would believe in Persia were I to describe faithfully all that I witnessed on this fortunate night? Would they believe me when I told them that I saw more diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and jewels

of every kind, collected in this room, than the shah of Iran, or even the father of the great Mogul, had ever possessed? that I saw more women at one view than existed in the harem of the Asylum of the Universe, and more beauty in one little corner than had ever been seen throughout the vast regions of Asia; skins more resplendent than that of the angel Gabriel; necks that would put a peacock's to shame; eyes to inflame, and forms to enrapture the veriest dervish who lived in the mountains of *Cheheldîr?* '*Bah! bah! bah!*' said I to myself, 'whatever of life, whatever of joy, whatever of enjoyment exists, here is the *Almags*, here is the very essence of them. Where is Persia, her beards and sheepskins, her long veils and hidden females; and where England, her riches, her adorable women, and the powers of enjoyment and sociability which she dispenses to her children!'

This was my first impression, and I believe it was written on my face, because

soon after I was accosted by a man of agreeable conversation, in my own language, who asked me what I thought of the scene before me.

I did not like to make him suppose that we were such Turks* as not to have seen the world; and, suppressing all my real astonishment, I answered him very quietly, '*Bad neest*, it is not bad.'

My new friend, who, it seems, had been in India, and in the southern parts of Fars, smiled at my answer, and remarked, 'You will allow that this is a more agreeable sight than if the women's faces were veiled, as they are in Persia?'

'Yes, yes,' said I; 'I see but one defect; why is there such a large proportion of old women? They at least might be veiled.'

'Perhaps,' said he, 'that would be an improvement; but in this free country every body has a right to do what they like with their own face.'

* *Turk*, in Persian, implies lout, boor, peasant.

'But have you no means,' said I, 'of getting rid of superfluous old women? It is said of our shah Abbas, that he was reduced to the necessity of killing some of his old eunuchs, who did not die off fast enough to please him.'

'Ah,' answered my friend laughing, 'the death of one old woman here under such circumstances would produce a rebellion. We have no shah Abbas in this country.' He then very kindly volunteered to explain to me many things which, from his knowledge of our customs, he was aware must be new to me.

He first pointed out one of the king's sons, a prince of the blood royal, who was walking about in the crowd like any other person, talking and being talked to. The only mark of distinction which he enjoyed was, that nobody turned their back upon him if they could help it. 'Ah,' said I, 'our *shah zadehs* would not be satisfied with that; they would not come here with-

out a *pahendaz**, and without receiving a handsome present upon entering the door. Does not your prince get any thing for his condescension?'

'Beyond tea and bread and butter,' answered my companion, 'I know of nothing else.'

'Wonderful!' said I, 'you are an incomprehensible people; kings and their sons are of no consequence in this country compared to what they are in ours; you would make one suppose that they are as little thought of by you as common mortals are by our kings and princes.'

'Merit,' said my friend, 'merit of whatsoever kind, that is our great *kebleh;* that is the point to which we all pay our adoration.'

'And what may the merit of that man be,' said I, pointing to one with an eagle's eye, 'who attracts every body's attention; and near whose person it seems to be a privilege to approach? He must

* Spreading the ground with shawls and rich stuffs.

be a king, at least, if the other be a prince.'

'You are a man of quick observation,' said my informant; 'for that person exemplifies what I have just remarked. He is no prince; he is the greatest conqueror of the age—the pacifier of the world—the vanquisher of what was esteemed invincible; though of noble descent, he began a soldier's career, like many a youth before him, with nothing but his sword and his heart to carry him through life; and has raised himself by superior merit alone to be the shield and breastplate of his country, and the admiration of nations.'

'But see,' said I, 'see, what can he be doing? By the beard of Ali! he is pouring out a cup of tea for that oldest of all old women! he is performing the office of one of our valets! What sort of custom is that?'

'There is no degradation in doing a kind act,' said my friend.

'No degradation,' exclaimed I, 'for the

pacifier of the world to be feeding old women! What words are these? If our Nadir Shah, whom you will allow was at least as great a blood-drinker as this *ghazi* of yours, did not keep up the respect due to him by cutting off at least a score of heads per day, he could not sleep quiet. What would he have thought of your old women?'

'Our feelings on that head,' said my companion, 'must and ever will remain incompatible. But come,' said he, 'come and see the dancing—this is new to you, I am sure—this will not fail to please you.'

We proceeded to where a circle of the most beautiful young maidens that the imagination can conceive were seriously occupied in varying the postures and attitudes of their persons into every combination of hand and foot, whilst young men, each in their place, were also going through a great many contortions, and taking much exercise. There was a profound decorum observed. If hands were touched, it was

only by the tips of fingers—glances there were none—no smiles—they danced as dervishes might dance; and evidently it was a serious business.

My companion was aware that in our countries no one danced save those who are hired for that purpose; and therefore he assured me that all those who exhibited themselves here were doing so for their own pleasure.

'Not that man surely,' said I, 'whose face bespoke pain, whose feet bespoke tight shoes, and who discovered to us the exertions he made by the streams that poured from his fat person?'

'At all events he is not paid for his exertions, whatever may be his motive,' said my friend. 'Our hired performers you will see when you visit a place prepared on purpose for such exhibitions.'

'But what is the meaning of this?' said I, observing an universal change to take place in the dancing; for much as I had remarked the decorum which reigned in

the first process, so much was I struck by the want of it in that which followed. Men and women in pairs, face to face, with hands grappling with each others' persons, were now swinging round with heedless velocity; sometimes rebounding from each other, at others striking against rival dancers, and making altogether an exhibition that I did not conceive could belong to the gravity and propriety which otherwise existed in the assembly.

'Custom familiarizes us with every thing,' said my communicative friend; 'this dance is of recent importation; it was violently opposed at first; but we have a certain tyrant among us called 'Fashion,' much more despotic than even your king of kings, whose decrees are more powerful than either reason or sense of propriety, and who, as you see, overthrows decorum, and makes of us, a nation naturally inclined to admire every thing that improves the dignity of our nature, a nation of frivolous and ridiculous imitators.'

'Can I believe my eyes?' said I, very abruptly; 'as I love the blessed Mahomed, there is your grand vizier dancing!'

'Yes,' said my friend, coolly; 'we all dance; the king and all his court dance; the grand vizier, the chancellor of the exchequer and the treasury, the viziers for things without and things within, the commander-in-chief and the horse guards, the lords of the admiralty and the navy—we all dance. There is no law against our heads of the church and our grand muftis dancing; our young clergymen dance, and so do our young lawyers.'

'By your own soul, and by the beard of my ancestors, I swear,' said I, 'that if our shah was to catch one of his viziers dancing he would spoil his sport for the future; he would give him such a bastinado on the soles of his feet that every toe would in its turn remind him of his folly.'

I perceived a strange looking *birish*, or

'no beard*;' his clothes pasted tighter to his body that those of any other man present, as if he were in the deepest wo†; his head flattened at the top, and curled out behind; his neck stiff, and in his deportment full of nothing but himself. Withal, he appeared to be a deceiver and a *cherb goo*, or an oily speaker, a sayer of fat things. 'Who can that personage be?' said I to my companion; 'in our country we should soon teach his mincing feet better manners, and he should limp for something.'

'That sort of person now-a-days we call an exquisite, a dandy; formerly he would have been called a 'd——d buck,' so much does fashion even change our forms of speech.'

'*Dambuk, Dambuk!*' said I, doubtingly,

* Youths, particularly effeminate-looking youths, are so called.

† Among the Easterns, to say of a man that his vest became tight to his body, is a figurative mode of saying he put on mourning.

'this must then be a descendant of one of the old unknowns—of one before the flood —a *nîmser*, or flat-head. How odd it is that our languages should be so nearly allied.'

'How?' said my companion, not understanding me; 'he is the modern of moderns; there is not a jot of antiquity about him.'

'Ha, then,' said I, 'you have not read our history. *Dambuk*, according to our *tarikhs*, or histories, was a flat-headed man, a descendant of a king of the ante-Adamites*. Now, have you understood?'

My friend laughed, and said, 'A capital joke, by Heavens!' and soon left me to repeat it to his friends.

During all this conversation I had lost sight of my ambassador, whom I discovered shortly after, surrounded by many *khanums*, who seemed to be making a strict scrutiny of his dress; but he was entirely absorbed in the charms of one young person, whom

* See d'Herbelot and Richardson.

he had successfully seated next to him, and upon whose splendid attractions he gazed with all the intenseness of a *majnoun*. I kept at a humble distance, for after all I was only like Saadi's bit of clay, which derived its scent from its connexion with the rose; and although I should have enjoyed a nearer acquaintance with some of the bewitching eyes which surrounded me, yet dreading the jealous disposition of my chief, I determined for the present to hide myself behind the veil of insignificancy.

When the hour of departure was come, which was about the time of our morning prayer, I took leave of my friend, and wishing that his friendship for me might never be less, I accompanied the ambassador to the carriage.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the ambassador in love.—He goes to the opera, the play, and longs to kidnap a clown for the use of his shah.

When we were in the carriage, the ambassador, unable to contain his emotions, exclaimed to me aloud,

'Ah, Hajji, by your beard, my heart is gone! my soul is become roast meat! Did you ever see such eyes, such teeth, such hair? Her skin is so exquisitely fine that one might trace the colour of the wine through it in its passage down her throat. No Georgian maid that was ever yet born would be worthy of holding her shoes. But what use is there in my feelings? We are Persians, and these infidels would not give us their daughters, even if we should consent to shave off our beards and wear a hat. What is to be done? Ah, Hajji, speak.'

'What can I say, O ambassador?' I answered. 'In truth she is a beautiful creature. By what good luck did you discover her?'

'She is the same,' said he, 'whose eyes met mine on the day I went to the great assembly of the king and his lords; and this evening, as soon as I saw her, it was evident that we were one, for our eyes met again. Her mother brought her to me, and love since then has taken seat in my heart. What is to be done?'

'We must make some verses upon her,' said I. 'Such a thing without poetry can never be.'

'But indeed,' said the ambassador, 'I did say plenty of enraptured things to her in verse! but who could understand me? 'Tis true the mehmandar endeavoured to interpret my expressions, but instead of softening her heart, she, her mother, and those around us, only laughed, and asked me to write down what I had said.'

'And what did you say?'

'I recited that charming ode of Hafiz, which begins,

'O Zephyr! go say to that tender fawn,
Why have you driven us to the deserts and the mountains?''

'If her heart was not won by that,' said I, 'it is not to be won at all. Then you must send her presents, some shawls,—paint for her eyes,—turquoises, to increase your luck. You must write her a letter in red ink.'

'Ah!' said the ambassador, as he stepped out of the carriage, 'this is a dangerous country for a Mussulman. The eyes of the women are without pity; they slay right and left; and the customs of the nation are so seductive, that all we have to do is to put our trust in Allah.'

From this time forwards the ambassador never took me, nor any of his suite, to the assemblies of the English. Whether he feared that we should be spies upon his actions, and repeat to our shah, to his prejudice, the influence which the manners

and customs of the infidels had acquired over him, or whether he apprehended that we might become his rivals in the conquests which he flattered himself his own personal attractions might make over the world of houris which had opened to his view, none of us ever discovered, but he went abroad for the future accompanied by the mehmandar only, whilst we remained at home, counting our beads.

However, when it suited his dignity that his suite should attend upon him, then we shared his pleasures. He went occasionally to the great show-houses, some of which are royal establishments, and of which there were many in the city, and then he took us with him, although Mohamed Beg, who was daily trying how to keep to the ordinances of our faith, usually endeavoured to remain at home.

The ambassador's principal place of public resort was a house fitted up for no other purposes than music and dancing. The first night of our appearance there (al-

though we had been warned by the mehmandar that we should see marvellous sights) was indeed a night of wonderment. The ambassador was inserted into a small cell, like a bee in a honeycomb, from whence the sight which burst upon him was such that words cannot describe, and which no Persian, who had not seen it, could ever be made to comprehend. In every part of an immense house, more spacious than one of our largest mosques, in cells similar to that of the ambassador's, were seated men and women openly, and without the shadow of concealment; below was a sea of heads; the whole place was lighted up by lamps and candles, more numerous than the most splendid fire exhibition ever given at the court of the shah. The music to us was incomprehensible; thousands of instruments produced a confusion of sounds, which seemed perfect heaven to the English, but which to us were new and astounding. We longed to give them a specimen of what our players of the *kamouncha* could do,

and to treat them to a crash of the shah's *nakara khaneh*, his brazen trumpets, his heart-stirring drums. Of a sudden an immense curtain drew up, and straight we saw a succession of sights that no pen can describe. First came a tragical story, which nearly set us crying; and then feats of dancing, the wonders of which no person could ever conceive, not even in his dream. The story was chanted from beginning to end; and certainly if the voices we heard, both from men and women, had been tutored to sing our songs, and had they performed before our shah, he would have fallen from his throne in a trance of delight. As for the dancing, it was in every respect so astonishing, that opinions were strongly divided between us, whether those who danced were live figures or automatons. We talked much upon this subject, and many of us would not be convinced that our senses were not deceiving us, when a good-natured Frank offered to clear up the difficulty. He conducted two of us

through many long, narrow, and crooked passages to the very spot where the dancers were performing, and there indeed he effectually convinced us that what we had seen at a distance were real men and women. And to our surprise we found, that the *gins* and *peris* who had been flitting about were nothing but painted mortals, which, when closely inspected, looked more like demons than the inhabitants of paradise.

There was a man of science who frequented the ambassador at the opera, and who did not cease extolling the beautiful voices of the European singers. 'Tis true few of them were English, but we were tired of eternally hearing of *Catlani, Trimzani*, as if they stood alone in the world, and as if we could not boast of our singers and musicians too. At length, one night, when the ambassador had had his soul dried up by these constant praises, he said, ' You may talk, sir, as long as you please of your Catlanis, and your Trimzanis; but

perhaps you have never heard of our *Barbut**; he indeed was a singer!'

The ambassador continued to frequent this place, until one night he found that an attempt was made to represent his own countrymen, which he fancied was a slight upon himself. He assured us that not only had they made the Asylum of the Universe dance, and brought forth his whole harem unveiled to do the same, but that they had had the audacity to get up a *pas de deux*, as they called it, between our blessed Prophet and a queen of the Franks. After this the ambassador became shy of this entertainment, but he occasionally went to other theatres. These show-houses, the interior magnificence of which surpasses everything that we had heard or read of, even of the palaces of forty pillars of Jemsheed, and the seven paradises of Baharam, are the

* Barbut was a famous master of music to Khosru Parvis, king of Persia, and the inventor of the Barbitan, a musical instrument.

nightly resort of the English people. 'In the name of Allah!' we exclaimed, 'the English must be the most idle nation under the sun. The fêtes of our *No Rouz*, the celebration of the death of Imam Hussein, and some other of our annual festivals, are sufficient for the recreation of the people of Iran; but here amusement is unceasing, and every day with them seems to be the beginning of a new year.'

The first night of our appearance at a great show-house, we saw the representation of a story, well calculated to excite our feelings. Although we did not understand what was said, yet the acting was sufficient. An old shah, white and decrepit with age, was thrust from his kingdom by his own children, and driven to the utmost verge of desperation. We all shed tears, reflecting what might be the fate of our blessed shah in his old age, beset as he is with such a numerous and hostile family of sons. We eagerly inquired from the mehmandar how

it was possible to get one so old to personify the character, when almost immediately after, a young and handsome man came to pay his respects to Mirza Firouz, and was introduced as the unfortunate king who had just been driven from his kingdom. We could scarcely restrain ourselves from touching him, as with one voice we all exclaimed, '*La illaha illallah!*' He seemed quite delighted with our astonishment, and assured the ambassador that his approbation was the greatest eulogium which could be passed upon his performance.

To this heart-rending amusement succeeded more buffoonery than ever was performed or conceived by our most renowned *luties*, or mountebanks. The famous jester of Shah Abbas was a mere child to the one whom we saw here. The convulsive laughter of the ambassador, and the involuntary wagging of all our beards, produced by his inimitable acting, must have been a source of considerable congratu-

lation to him. He had a mouth which opened and shut to any dimensions; limbs which seemed to belong to his neighbour as much as to himself; and a body entirely flexible. The ambassador immediately conceived a plan of enticing this man to Persia; he felt sure that the best present which he could offer to the shah on his return would be a *luti* of this description. His own influence would thus be effectually secured; and with so powerful an instrument in hand he felt that he might baffle every machination which the grand vizier, his open and avowed enemy, might plot for his destruction. But when he was informed by the mehmandar of the enormous sums actors of reputation are sure to realise in England, his plan fell to the ground.

We stared with astonishment when we heard that this buffoon was paid more than the shah's chief executioner; that the man who had acted the old king never failed to receive a greater sum annually than our

grand vizier; and that the revenue of the first woman singer at the opera exceeded that of many of the king's sons.

'*Derough, derough,* a lie! a lie!' was immediately heard from each of us; but when we saw into what a rage this word inevitably threw the mehmandar, and indeed every Englishman to whom it was addressed, we put the finger of suspense on our lips, and only renewed the expressions of our mutual conviction when we were alone, asserting that such unheard-of expenditure, for objects in themselves so frivolous, could only be the act of a nation of fools, and not of the wise and calculating people among whom we were living.

CHAPTER V.

Hajji and his chief begin to talk English.—The ambassador makes a mistake, and gets into a dilemma.

I BEGAN now to make myself tolerably well understood in the English language. 'Tis true that I was very often incomprehensible; and many words which I had picked up from my friends on board ship I soon found were none of the most refined, and did not pass current at court. The ambassador, too, ventured in great measure to free himself from the tutorage of the mehmandar, and to speak for himself. He had more opportunities than I of exercising his knowledge, and occasionally got into difficulties by too great confidence in his own powers.

An instance of this occurred which is worth recording. He, as usual, had been to an evening assembly, when on the fol-

lowing morning he called for me in a great hurry. 'For the sake of Ali,' said he, 'bring me immediately that vocabulary of English words which the *foozool*, that over-officious person, on board the last ship taught us. I am in the greatest fear that I have made some terrible mistake, and that the designing wretch has purposely misled us. Should he have made me draw a dog's skin* over my face, *wallah, billah, tallah!* by Allah, I'll drag his liver through every hole in his body.'

I brought it to him without delay, and then in great anxiety he ran over the words, written, for the sake of better pronunciation, in our own character. 'I am right,' said he, half exulting, half mortified; 'and if I am right, then that bankrupt lieutenant has laughed at my beard. Please Allah, I'll burn his father if ever I catch him. He has disgraced me before the world.'

* This is one of the modes of expressing an act of indecency.

'How was it?' said I; 'perhaps it is not so bad as you imagine.'

'I was in conversation with a lady last night,' said he; 'a lady of high consideration; a wife of one of the *omrahs*, and one whose good opinion I am anxious to secure for many reasons. She was very inquisitive about our customs, and asked many particular questions concerning the general appearance and domestic habits of our women. 'And now tell me,' said she, 'what sort of a woman may your wife be?''

''*Very good wife, ma'am,*' said I, in English.

''But what sort of a person has she? is she tall or short?'

''*Very good person, ma'am; little short, but waist like cypress tree,*' said I.

''What sort of eyes has she?'

''*Very good eyes,*' said I; '*as big as that,*' touching the tip of my thumb with the tip of my fore-finger.

''What sort of mouth? what sort of teeth?'

"'*Very good mouth, very good teeth, ma'am. Teeth like* murwari, *pearl.*'

'I then endeavoured to explain to her as well as I could every other particular which she seemed anxious to know; but in giving an account of the dress of our women, and its different articles, I made use of some words which were either ridiculous, or indecorous, for when they had struck her ear, I immediately perceived that I had eaten something very filthy. She did not appear angry, but surprised, abashed, and amused; whilst I looked like an ass, a twice-dotted ass*. I streamed at every pore. I wished myself at the bottom of the sea. I felt that I was less than a dog; less even than a Frangi dog; and my misery, instead of subsiding only increased, when I perceived my *khanum* unburthening her astonishment to her sister, in a manner which seemed to produce much extravagant merriment, and which left me

* *Khur be teshdid*, an ass with an accent. *Tashdid* denotes the accent which doubles a letter.

looking more like a fool than ever. It was evident that in a quarter of an hour every woman in the room must have been made acquainted with my mistake; and no doubt by this time there is neither man, woman, nor child in the city who is not holding me up to ridicule!'

'But is there any thing so infamous,' said I, 'in saying that in English which in Persian is a common expression?'

'Ah!' said the ambassador, 'you do not know the English so well as I. They are greater laughers at beards than we ourselves; and although we are total strangers to their manners, yet if they discover the least deviation from them, they remark it with the most pitiless precision. It was but the other day that I was indulging myself in a stretch and a yawn after a long dinner, when I perceived that the eyes of all the company were upon me with looks of amazement. Had I eaten of the unclean beast, they could not have stared more.'

At this moment the mehmandar came

in, and we immediately referred to him for the real value of the words which the ambassador had used.

He looked vastly amused when the whole circumstance was laid before him; and said, 'The words are without doubt some of the coarsest of which our language can boast, and you must have picked them up on ship-board, or from some low-bred persons in the streets.'

The ambassador then explained that the whole blame lay with his unsainted teacher, the lieutenant. Still he was anxious to clear himself from the imputation of ill-manners, and asked whether there were any dictionaries in the English language to which he could refer, 'for,' said he, 'if the words are there, I am safe.' The mehmandar talked much of a certain thing called fashion, which made some words proper, and others the contrary. He then said, 'I will look at the dictionary which is esteemed the standard in our language,' and immediately fetched a volume from

among his books, written by one Johnson, who it seems is the *Kamûs** of England. On turning to the proper page, to the inconceivable delight of the ambassador, the obnoxious words were found. This greatly quieted his apprehensions, and he longed, in self-justification, to send an explanatory note to his friend, the khanum; when the mehmandar assured him that the lady had good sense enough to perceive that his mistake was quite involuntary. 'It will only put her to the necessity,' said he, 'of answering your note; whereas she very likely would wish to be supposed ignorant of the whole transaction.'

'Strange things do I hear,' said the ambassador; 'we, in Persia, whom you know are very particular in covering our speech with the veil of decency, even we are not so refined as this.'

* A celebrated Arabic dictionary, so called, compiled and abridged, as it is said, from another in sixty five volumes.

'Ah!' said the mehmandar, 'no refinement can approach that which is now expected from the well-bred in England. Ingenuity is at work daily in inventing new words for those which not very long ago used to pass as perfectly admissible.'

'And, in the name of the Prophet,' said the ambassador, 'let me ask, since you are so extremely particular, which is the most approved manner amongst you for cloaking the word 'wife?''

'We have no cloak for that word,' said the mehmandar; 'there can be no indecency in using the word 'wife.''

'There,' remarked our chief, 'the feelings of the two countries are completely at variance. We esteem that designation as very improper. No one ventures to ask another after his wife. Light of my eyes!' exclaimed he, 'don't you see what a thousand improper allusions are implied in that word? No, we inquire after each other's houses. Instead of coarsely asking, without any disguise, as you do here, how does

your wife? we say, and then always with a certain degree of mystery, how is it with your house?'

'That may be very convenient,' said the mehmandar, 'when the inquiry embraces an indefinite number of wives; but here, as we have only one at a time, such a sweeping expression is unnecessary.'

'Again,' said the ambassador, 'allow that nothing can be more proper and refined than the word *bismillah**, which we repeat before we begin any action: it appears to sanctify it, and to propitiate its success. If it were known that you never use it, my countrymen would class you with the Cûrds, whom they call *shaîtan bacheh*, children of the devil, because they never pronounce the *bismillah*; particularly on certain important occasions, when every good Mussulman never fails saying it.'

'Exclamations of so serious a nature,' said the mehmandar, 'lose their value, and become improper when used upon

* In the name of God.

every common occasion. As, for instance, what can be so absurd as that cry so common in the streets of Tehran, 'Cucumbers! cucumbers! in the name of the blessed Iman, cucumbers!' '

'And what can be more preposterous," returned the ambassador, with much animation, 'than your passing one universal curse over every thing that comes in your mind. On board your ships every thing is either 'dam good,' or 'dam bad!' It was either 'dam fine ship,' or 'dam bad ship!' You call one lady 'dam pretty!' to another you say, 'dam ugly fellow!' '

To this the mehmandar could say nothing.

This conversation being ended, the ambassador determined forthwith to procure a master who should instruct him in the English language, 'lest,' said he, 'by making more mistakes, we leave a bad name behind.' I also, in conformity to the commands of the shah, assiduously

renewed the study of it, in order that I might be able to make a translation of all the books in that language.

There was another Frank dialect to which our thoughts were turned, for we had been frequently asked by our friend, the khan who took us for fire-worshippers, whether it was taught in our schools: he called it Latin.

'Latin!' said the ambassador, 'what have we to do with Latin? we never heard of such a language.'

'It is taught in all our schools and colleges,' said the khan. 'Nobody can get on in the world without Latin.'

'Our monarchy has existed ever since the days of Jemsheed and Noushirvan without Latin,' said the Mirza; 'our Fath Ali Shah is a great king without Latin, and we hope to burn the fathers of the Russians without Latin; after that, of what use can it be to us?'

'If you are ignorant of Latin,' said the khan, in amazement, 'perhaps you can talk

French, or Italian? they are universal tongues.'

'No,' said the ambassador, 'neither French nor Italian. I suppose,' added he, smiling, 'your lordship talks both Turkish and Arabic?'

'No,' said the khan, 'quotations in either of those languages are not expected in Parliament; therefore nobody learns them. Whenever you get a House of Commons in Persia you must learn Latin.'

'Yes,' said the Mirza, '*bashed*, so be it; we will wait till then. For ever after, we never called our friend the English khan by any other name than *Latini goo*, or the Latin-monger.

CHAPTER VI.

English women visit the ambassador.—He receives letters from Persia.—He gets into an unexpected scrape.

We had now been several months in England, and little by little began to adopt many of the customs of the infidels. When two of us walked out together, instead of holding each other's hands as in our own country, we proceeded arm in arm: moreover we made no scruple occasionally to be seen in a similar predicament with a woman. The ambassador's carpet spreader, barber, and grooms, were frequently met in the streets escorting the maids belonging to our establishment. We ceased eating with our fingers; we drank beer like Christians, and it was irksome to sit even for half an hour on the ground with our legs bent under us. Mohamed Beg was the only one who adhered to our own customs, and who

was ever exhorting us to follow his example.

Mirza Firouz himself had made such progress in the good-will and affection of the natives that the gate of his house was continually thronged by them. The women in particular came in crowds; sometimes in company of their husbands and brothers, at others in separate bodies; sometimes by twos and threes, and occasionally entirely alone. They came without fear or shame; many who, without even knowing the ambassador, thought it quite sufficient to ask for the Circassian, and walked up our stairs as they would to a show-house. They certainly took liberties with us which they would not dare to do with their own countrymen, taking us no doubt for animals from the mountains, and looking at us as they would at wild beasts. The ambassador, however, who was as sharp-sighted as a lynx, did not allow such advantages to remain fallow. He became friends with most of the celebrated beauties.

He had brought a large stock of shawls, and other precious commodities, purposely for presents, which sensibly diminished in proportion as his friendships increased. He criticised the brilliancy of eyes, the beauties of complexion, the smallness of feet, the circumference of waists, and fragrance of the breath of his acquaintance, with as much quickness as the most experienced of the English *kashengs*, or exquisites. He professed to be really in love with the first object who had attracted his admiration, but in fact his heart generally remained in possession of the last pair of bright eyes which had shed their lustre upon him. In love with himself, and in love with those around him, he passed a life which one of the faithful in paradise might have envied. In short, his spirits were always wound up, and his brain overflowed with sanity.

But as our sheikh wisely saith, 'What rose-bush can always be green, or what rotundity is there which will not occasion-

ally be blighted with leanness?' In the midst of all this prosperity, a despatch arrived one morning from the foot of the throne of our king of kings, dated from the imperial stirrup, which gave the ambassador serious matter for cogitation. As fast as he unrolled the numerous letters addressed to him, so did he give us a notion of their contents by his exclamations.

'So that bankrupt pacha of Arz Roum has been lodging a complaint against me,' said he aloud, 'for having cut off my shatir's ears! May his liver become water! *Inshallah!* I will make him look less than a dog when I return. And that old fox, Mirza Sheffi, has not lost this opportunity of making the shah's face turn upon me; back luck attend his ancestry! Let me but once get the free use of my tongue before the shah, we will see who of us will stand the tallest. With all his cunning, I will out-talk him and all his clan! Ah!' said he, turning over his letters, 'at length I have found

one from my house.' He hastened to open a *malfufeh*, a small note enclosed in a larger letter, which evidently was from the khanum, his wife. As he read, he became much agitated; his nostrils dilated, and his beard spread itself out. Although he would willingly have kept his feelings secret, yet they were too strong for him, and he broke out thus—'Would that the Circassian, her father and mother, and all her tribe, were at the bottom of the sea, before I had seen her! Wonderful ashes have fallen on my head! So I'm not counted one amongst mankind in my own family, for having taken her into my household! I am to be called a *namerd!* a 'no man,' and I know not what else. After all, when she returns to Tehran, she will be an accomplished person, and the khanum will possess a slave such as no other wife in Persia possesses. Ah!' said he, 'my existence is turned into bitterness with this harem gossip! What is to be done? Ay, Mahboob!' speaking to his confidential

black slave, 'we'll send her back forthwith, and my soul will be free!' Then taking the collar of his coat in his hand, he shook it well.

He continued to talk long upon the subjects contained in his letters: at one time reviling the prime minister, and praising the shah; at another holding himself ill-used by the shah, and praising himself; then lanching forth against his own wife and her relations; then bewailing his fate at being thrown thus far from his home, among infidels; and again in unbounded terms praising the excellence of those infidels, their honesty, their good faith, and uttering a fervid wish that he might pass his life amongst them. All this, we knew, was produced by the excitement of the moment; for when he came to his own sober reason, he was quick-sighted enough to look upon the decrees of fate as inevitable, and to bend to a necessity which no human agency can avert.

As the business of the day proceeded,

we had almost forgotten our letters; and subjects, which in our country would have produced conversation for a month, here were almost immediately wiped from our memories by the active and busy life common to an existence among Franks. The ambassador had learned to be extremely interested in certain printed papers which were issued every morning to the public, because scarcely a day passed without his finding the most minute transactions of his own life therein recorded. 'Now let us see,' said he, 'what these cowardly publishers of lies will say of me to-day? I shall have the contents of my letters brought before me; and no doubt they will tell me that the shah is preparing the *felek*, the bastinado, for me at my return.' Towards the close of the day, however, there did occur a circumstance which was in fact noticed by the lie-tellers, although nothing came from it save much personal fear to the ambassador, and some amusement to the lookers-on.

About our time of going to rest, we heard a strange commotion in the ambassador's *dewan khaneh*, or hall of audience. Knocks, stamps, loud voices became incessant, and they increased to an alarming pitch, quite sufficient to be heard in the neighbouring houses. Striving to gain admittance, I just caught a glimpse of the shah's representative, without either cap or coat, apparently in a very confused state. He shut the door upon me with violence. The mehmandar, who happened to be in the house, also hastened to know what was the matter; but finding that no entrance into the scene of action was allowed, we retreated. The noise still continued, and our apprehensions increased. At length Mahboob, the ambassador's slave, came down in great trepidation to the mehmandar, entreating him for the love of Allah to go to his assistance. I accompanied the mehmandar into the *dewan khaneh*, and there the first thing we saw was a well-dressed lady streched upon the sofa, and a younger one

standing by her side, weeping. The mehmandar inquired the reason of this extraordinary scene? The lady stared at him for some time, but would give no answer; the other only sobbed. At length the principal person, who pretended to take the mehmandar for the ambassador, roared out, 'Do you take me for a fool, not to see through your trick? You have gone and shaved your beard off, and now want to frighten me by assuming a new character. But I will not go. Nothing shall force me from this spot.' Upon which the mehmandar, who was acquainted with the manners of his country, told her that if she did not immediately take her departure, he would call the night-watch and eject her by force. Seeing she could do nothing more, she flung herself out of the house, followed by her handmaid; and so ended a scene worthy of the Thousand and One Nights.

Our chief had made a rapid retreat to his bed-room, and we saw nothing of

him till the next morning, when, with the greatest good humour, and not without some confusion, he gave us the following account of this strange adventure.

'After I had read my letters, I mounted my horse and rode into the Park. I was in deep thought upon their contents, and was looking neither right nor left, when I was stopped by a servant, who, pointing to two women on foot, said that a lady would be glad to speak to me. I made my bow to the eldest of the two, who, without shame or hesitation, paid me many fine compliments, and told me that she would be very happy to make me an evening visit. 'There is no harm in that,' said I. '*Bismillah!* in the name of Allah, come.' She assented, and I took my leave. I thought but little of this adventure at the time; but I remarked that she was not like an Englishwoman, having the dark features of an Asiatic; and that she was neither young nor handsome. Owing to the ancient custom which we adopt in Persia

of leaving our door open to all comers, I did not hesitate in admitting her. She came, accompanied by a young person, who might be her maid, or her companion, for aught I knew; at all events she was her inferior in rank, though not in beauty, for she was surprisingly handsome. I did not exactly know how to behave to such visitors. The woman said much that I did not understand; but I discovered that she was not an Englishwoman, but a Portuguese. The interview was becoming very dull. I did as I would have done in my own country under such circumstances; I ordered fruit and wine to be placed before us, but tired of my madam, I addressed myself to the young beauty. My attentions, I soon perceived, were misplaced. The young one betrayed fear, the older jealousy—a storm impended—the Portuguese looked black and portentous. I had frequently witnessed the effects of jealousy in our harems, but had never seen it carried to the pitch I saw it now. The woman stormed and raved.

Up went one arm, down went the other. She followed me round the room; she beat me; she knocked my cap off my head; she tore my *caba* to bits. 'There is but one Allah!' I exclaimed, in the extremity of my fear. I was totally at a loss to know what she wanted, or what could pacify her. I offered her money; she took it from me, and threw it at the great mirrors which hung about the room. The young girl in the mean while was sobbing aloud. At length, tired of this horrid state, I escaped from her, and locked myself up in my bed-room. You know the rest. For the love of Allah, now tell me who this strange woman could possibly be? It appeared to me that she was a *khanum*. Her well-dressed servant, her own dress, her attendant, all bespoke her a person above the common ranks; but such jealousy as hers, such blows as she inflicted, by my beard, I think could only belong to the *shaitan* in person.'

The mehmandar was as much puzzled as

ourselves how to account for what had happened. He warned the ambassador against receiving into his house persons who were not properly introduced to him; remarking, that London was not like Ispahan, where every individual was more or less known, but that it was an immense receptacle for all sorts of characters, multitudes of whom lived by dishonest means; and such very probably was the lady in question. In short, he hinted that she was nothing more nor less than a foreign *jafjaf**.

'But,' said the ambassador, 'those bankrupt lie-tellers will immediately publish to the world that I was beating my Circassian slave; and in addition to the other lies told of me, I shall be looked upon as a monster of cruelty. What is to be done? By the blessed Ali, I will send her to my house at Tehran, and then my soul will be free!'

Upon this determination we parted.

* A courtezan.

CHAPTER VII.

Of English lies.—Hajji Baba makes a new acquaintance.—He describes the Hogg family.

This event was soon forgotten, and the ambassador, following his own pleasures, lived almost exclusively with the infidels, and abandoned his suite, I amongst the number, entirely to our own pursuits. Whatever may be said of the propensity of Persians to lying, we found out that a system of deceit was carried on in England which exceeded any thing that we could boast of in Persia. Scarcely a day passed but the ambassador was asked to lend his name to the extension of a great lie. One man pressed upon him the acceptance of a coach-whip, and immediately he inscribed upon his shop, in large letters, 'coach-maker to the shah of Persia.' On another occasion Mohamed Beg and I were walking quietly along the streets, inspecting

the shops, when a person in an apron stepped up to us with great humility, and invited us into his house. He was a maker of leather breeches; he insisted upon measuring each of us for a pair. In vain we told him it was not the custom of our country to wear leather breeches; such a garment was unknown in Iran. Nothing would satisfy him; he persuaded us to accede to his wishes, and measured we were. We afterwards heard that his object in doing this was to write up, 'leather breeches maker to the prophet Mahomed'. This was evidently done to laugh at our beards, nor do we think that any one in his senses could have invented such blasphemy, until we were assured that there was a well-known shop, situated in the most frequented part of London, where the existence of a God was openly denied; where the Christian religion was called a cheat; and where all sorts of blasphemy might be bought at so much the *miscal**.

* Twenty-four grains make one miscal.

One of the principal persecutions which the ambassador underwent was from the theatres and show-houses. In order to attract a crowd, they constantly invited him to attend their performances, announced his appearance in large printed characters all over the city, and at the same time published the falsehood, that he had named and ordered the play to be acted. How could he, when he had scarcely got through the first leaves of an English spelling book? However, when he was sorely pressed, he generally sent me to the theatre to personate him, and appointed one of our English servants to pass for the mehmandar. It was at one of these places, at a theatre called Horse Opera, where I was taking upon myself the airs of my master, pulling up my whiskers, and looking upon every one present from the heights of my condescension, that I got acquainted with a large English family, consisting of an amazing fat father, and of a very lean mother, with their son and three daughters.

They were seated in a box next to mine, and my elbow occasionally touched one of the younger daughters. This brought on looks, smirks, and an indication of desire to get acquainted. At length the mother, leaning over to her daughter, said, 'Present his excellency with an orange.' Upon which, blushing through an amazing pair of red cheeks, she hesitatingly held out her hand with the fruit. A compliment so entirely Persian, and so indicative of good-will and friendship, was received on my part with an immediate avowal of gratitude, and I used expressions similar to those which I would have used in Persia on such an occasion. Upon this the papa got up, with much formality. He was a complete *bajbaj**; one who evidently had settled that paradise was situated in the middle of his own body; and that lambs stuffed with pistachio nuts were the only riches worth being prized in this

* A man whose flesh shakes with fat.

world. He thanked me for my civility; and hoped for the future that the English and Persian nations would be united in the strictest bonds of friendship.

Putting on an ambassadorial air, I said that it was evident he was a man of sense, a man of learning, one who knew the world, and a *dowlet kha*, a lover of his country; and that I should not fail letting the shah know what a faithful servant I had found in him*.

He seemed to be rather confounded at this speech; but he soon recovered himself, and asked me a few questions, such as whether we had any thing like this in Persia (pointing to the theatre); whether we had horses like these; whether I talked French; and whether I was married and had children.

Upon my answer that I was not married, I observed that the young ladies put on

* The shah of Persia calls every man his *noker*, or servant.

new looks, and adjusted each a bit of their dress.

The mama's attentions to me were unceasing; and before the entertainment was over I was acquainted with the whole history of the family, as well as with all the excellencies and expectations of her daughters. By this I perceived that she was an accomplished old *taftaf**. The eldest, she assured me, was a very good girl; she was trying to convert Jews; was very fond of the poor, for whom she made stockings and petticoats, and taught their children herself. The second, who was the beauty of the family, was also the most accomplished; she danced and sung well, could draw flowers, and talk Italian. The youngest, she added, promised much, but was too young to be noticed yet; she was not out; she had not broken her shell, as the Turks say. She hinted that they would be very rich, because they had plenty

* A gossip.

of wealthy old aunts; and now for once I discovered a good reason why the English took such great care of their old women. Then she talked of her husband, who was every thing that a good husband ought to be, very rich, and very generous; he was obliged, 'tis true, to provide for his sons, but still he had enough to be liberal to his daughters also.

'*Mashallah!* praises to Allah!' said I, 'he is also very fat;' and I added, 'what may his fortunate name be?'

'Hogg, at your excellency's service,' said she. 'It is an old Scotch family, and we flatter ourselves that we come from some of the oldest of the stock.'

'*Penah be khoda!* refuge in Allah,' exclaimed I to myself; 'a family of the unclean beast! and old hogs into the bargain! My luck is on the rise to have fallen into such a set. And pray what may yours and the young ladies' names be?' said I.

'We're all Hoggs too,' said the mother, 'as you know; this girl,' presenting me to

her eldest daughter, 'her name is Mary; the second is Bessy; the third Jessy.'

Upon this the young maidens thought it right to talk to me; and little by little we all became one.

I was overpowered with questions. The eldest inquired whether or no we were converting our Jews; the second was anxious to know if I went to Almack's; and the third inquired, with great humility, what was my opinion concerning *Iskender*, or Alexander; was he a great conqueror or not? To all this the mother listened with great complacency; and I was becoming interested in the conversation of the beauty, whose moonlike face and flowing ringlets had attracted my observation, when the curtain fell, and the company began to disperse. Upon this the papa Hogg presented me with a card, as is usual among the Franks, and requesting permission to wait upon me, we separated.

My personification of the ambassador was of short duration; for whether my ap-

pearance did not entirely come up to their ideas of so great a personage, or whether, like many of their countrymen, they liked asking questions, my new friends managed to learn from my English attendant who I really was, what was my name, my title, and my situation.

Whether they thought ill or the contrary of me for my conduct, I little cared. It was evident that they were persons of no great consideration; and I had lived long enough amongst the English to know that the object which principally animated their exertions, and concentrated their wishes, was the being allowed to associate with the great. 'Allah! Allah! what a difference with the Persians!' exclaimed I; 'a man in the middle ranks of life fears the great khan as he does his ruin; he hides his riches, and puts on his meanest coat when he goes before him.'

However, I might have saved myself the trouble of a thought as to my conduct at the theatre; for the next morning ar-

rived my Hoggs at our door, leaving a whole handful of cards, and an invitation to me, the Mirza Hajji Baba, to dine with the *Saheb* and *Bibi* Hogg, as they say in India, on some day in the ensuing moon. 'I suppose,' said I, 'they must have some faith in astrologers, since they have fixed, no doubt, the first day on which there is a favourable conjunction of the planets for our feast.'

I kept these my new acquaintance secret from the ambassador; for although I might have frequented them or any one else without his knowledge, so little did he heed where I went, still I felt that in thus choosing new friends for myself I might excite his over-jealous mind, and perhaps draw upon me his censure. At the same time I did not wish that the Franks should be acquainted with the sort of subjection in which I stood before him. Little do English people know how much every inferior amongst despotic nations is in the power of his chief. They, the English,

appear totally independent of each other; and my friend Hogg puts his hat on one side, and brushes by a king's son without any sort of fear; whilst I, in my own country, would scarcely do as much towards the prince's scullion. In taking these precautions, I found that a scheme had crept into my brain, engendered by subjects daily discussed by the young infidels of my acquaintance. I recollected all that the mother Hogg had related to me concerning the wealth with which her daughters were to be endowed, and there appeared to me no good reason why I should not try to obtain a share in such a prize. 'Tis true, my first essay in fortune-hunting had proved abundantly unsuccessful, and the cries of Sugarlips and her demons of women, expelling me from the house, still rung in my ears; but what a total difference was there between her and the moon-faced Bessy! I had not sold pipe-sticks in the English bazar. I might be the son of a Persian *beglerbeg* for aught

the Hoggs knew; and as long as I kept them from the ambassador, there was no knowing to what lengths I might not proceed. I might be married to a beautiful infidel, and in possession of thousands, before he or any one of my countrymen could have time to pick the dust out of their eyes, or unlock the surprise of their understandings. 'Let an Ispahani alone,' said I to myself in secret satisfaction, 'for advancing his own little fortunes. Am I not handsome enough for any one? My beard is still as black as on the first day it was called a beard; and if now and then a gray hair should appear, have we not plenty of *khenna* and *reng** in the house to make it all perfect again? I begin now to understand English, and if I can only acquire half the *chum wa hum*† in speaking it which I possess in my own tongue, by the soul of Ali, I will get on the best side of

* Drugs for dyeing the hair.
† Flattery and paying compliments.

the wisest beard that was ever possessed by a Frank, be he the father of Aflatoon * himself. Besides, the maiden is a jewel in herself; and should I be happy enough to transport her to Tehran, who knows, that in delivering her up to the shah, to what dignities I might not aspire !'

* Plato.

CHAPTER VIII.

He visits the Hogg family.—Talks English.—Makes mistakes and excites surprise.

I THOUGHT it right to inquire much concerning the etiquettes of English dinners, lest I should make some fearful mistake in the one to which I was invited; and as I found that it was not necessary to withhold visiting until that event had taken place, I ventured to call at the house of my new friends. They lived in one of the great avenues leading from the city. I knocked freely until somebody came, for that I had observed was the best mode of not being oppressed with the indignity of waiting; and when the servant, with looks of haste, anger, and amazement opened the door, I found that the hour for so doing was fortunate; for when I asked for the master of the house,

the slave said that he was not at home, but that his mistress and the young khanums were. To get at once into an European harem in this easy manner was more than I could have expected; and as I walked up a tedious flight of stairs, I had full time to pull up my moustache, and to smooth down the stray hairs of my beard into their appointed places. I gave a new pinch to my cap, put it well on one side, gave a fresh twist to my *zoulfs*, or curls, and pressed my shawl well over my hips. All this took place at the back of a huge thick-legged infidel, who every now and then looked behind him to see if I was following; and when we had ascended to a landing-place he stopped, and boldly asked my name. I did not like this, for I immediately recollected how the same leading question was asked me by the fierce attendants upon Sugarlips, and how soon after I was kicked down stairs by them for my pains. I therefore

said, hurried as I was, in my own language, '*Be shûma cheh**;' when, to my surprise, he opened the door, and roared out, 'Be shûma cheh' before my face, whilst I followed him, utterly confounded at the occurrence.

However, I was soon put at my ease, by the agreeable and flattering reception which I received from the mother Hogg and her daughters. She began by making apologies for the ignorance of her servant, who did not know my rank and title, and who had made such a mistake about my name, 'for,' said she, 'you are a mirza, is it not so?'

'*Yes, ma'am*,' said I, '*what can I do?*'

'But 'mirza' in your country is 'prince,'' said she, 'so we read in Morier's Travels: are we right?'

'*He sometime eat dirt, ma'am, but now he right*,' said I, as well as I could speak in their language.

* Meaning, 'What is that to you?'

The fair Bessy then asked me whether my father was not a mirza also; and whether I did not come from a long line of princes?

I assured her that our country may in fact be called a country of princes, for we became mirzas at pleasure. The difference between a king's son and myself was, that he carried his title behind him, whilst mine preceded me; and I gave her to understand that this distinction was in fact so trifling, that there was no great difference between our respective pretensions.

This being established, it was quite amusing to observe the rate at which they started with the word 'Prince,' as if it had never crossed their lips before. Whatever they addressed to me was prefaced with that monosyllable, until at length, in my own defence, I was obliged myself to ask a few questions.

'*Where is your papa?*' said I to the beautiful Bessy. The mama answered, 'He is gone into the city; he attends to

his business every day, and returns in the evening.'

'*Ah! then*,' said I, '*he is merchant—same in my country:—merchant sit in bazar all day, at night shut up shop, and come home—What he sell, ma'am?*'

'Mr. Hogg,' said the lady, with some dignity, 'does not keep a shop, he is an East India merchant.'

'*Then perhaps he sell ham*,' said I, thinking that his name might be a designation of his trade, as it frequently is in Persia*.

'Sells hams!' exclaimed the lady, whilst her daughters tittered. 'Why should he sell hams, prince?'

'*Because he one Hogg, ma'am. In our country, merchant sometime called after the thing he sells.*'

'La, prince!' exclaimed the lady, 'what an odd custom. Hogg is an old family name, and has nothing to do with the ani-

* As for instance, *Ali, bakal*—Ali, the chandler. *Mohamed Beg, hayat*—Mohamed Beg, the tailor.

mal. There are Hoggs both in England and Scotland.'

'You might as well say, prince,' remarked the young Jessy, 'that Sir Francis Bacon, the famous Lord Verulam, was a pork butcher;' 'and that all our Smiths, Taylors, Coopers, Bakers, Cooks, and a thousand others, were representatives of their professions,' added Bessy.

'Well, I never heard any thing like it,' summed up the mama. 'Mr. Hogg a ham-seller, indeed! La, prince! what could you be thinking of?'

I soon discovered that I had unheedingly gone blindfolded into a forbidden sanctuary, and I made the best of my way back. I begged pardon in the best manner I was able; said that I was walking without a guide among English customs; that there was no shame in our country attached to being a merchant, and that I thought there could be none in England, where merchants, so I had heard, were possessors, and therefore kings of coun-

tries, which once had been governed by some of the greatest potentates who had ever existed in the East. I then healed all the wounds I had inflicted, by adding, '*Mr. Hogg, perhaps, he one India king?*'

'No, prince,' said the lady, apparently quite pacified, 'no, not yet; we call them directors, not kings; but he expects very soon to be in the direction: indeed, I believe he is canvassing now.' I was going to ask what canvassing meant, when the dervish-like Mary asked me, in a very subdued voice, whether I had been acquainted with any of the missionaries who had lately gone to Persia?

'*Yes, ma'am,*' said I, '*I know one padré, who almost killed by Mollahs at Isfahan. He tell them our prophet one bad fellow—one cheat; they tell him, papa* (the Pope), *one ass, and begin stone him; he run away, 'pon my honour.*'

'But your Mollahs acted very wrong,' said she, colouring: 'Why were they not converted?'

'*That not easy, ma'am,*' said I; '*shah cut off head; that one bad thing; then Christian one nasty fellow in Persia—eat pork, drink wine—more bad as Jew; not same as English. English all clean and rich. King of England one strong king. Armenians and Christians of Persia, poor, very poor—very dirty—very bad. No, ma'am, a poor Mussulman in Persia is better than one most rich Christian.*'

'But surely,' said this mollah of a maid, 'you think of the salvation of your souls in Persia; don't you, prince?'

'Yes,' said I, 'to be sure,' hazarding an English *latifeh*, or joke; 'we think much of our true souls, but more of the soles of our feet.' I assured her that I was in fact a very indifferent Mussulman, and that I should be ordered to undergo many a penance by our priests on my return to Persia; but if they had any idea that I was likely to turn Christian, they would persecute me to the very verge of desperation, and per-

haps take away my life.' I then continued thus:—'*King George come to Persia; send one great army, take Persia; make new king there; then Persians perhaps 'come Christians. One padré, by himself come, do no good. In Persia all business done with sword.*'

'But we have sent plenty of Bibles to Persia,' said Mary; 'they must do good.'

'*Bible very good, ma'am; Persians no say bad. Koran very good too: Mussulman say your prophet very good prophet; why you no say our prophet good too?*'

'Ah,' said she, 'we'll make you a Christian before you leave us. You have never been to our church yet, have you?'

I answered that I had never been there, and that indeed I should never have ventured to enter one of their places of worship for fear of the rough treatment which I might be likely to receive; for if a Christian ever ventures into one of our mosques, it is a hundred to one that he leaves it

with a whole skin, and I did not know but that I might be treated in the same manner in England.

Mary assured me that their churches were open to every faith, and that their mollahs only wanted opportunities to reclaim the unbeliever from his errors. She then pressingly invited me to go with her family to church on the following day, which I willingly agreed to do.

As I rose to go, the mother spoke very kindly to me; hoped that I would come frequently to see them; whilst Bessy, whose eye had frequently met mine, smiled as she said to me in very good Persian, '*Khoda hafiz shuma**.'

I expressed my surprise at this, when the mother assured me that since we had met at the show-house, her daughters had thought of nothing but me. That Mary's only wish was to make me a Christian; that Bessy had already learnt much of the

* May God protect you.

Persian grammar; and that Jessy had done nothing but pore over the history of Persia.

This intelligence gave me the greatest satisfaction, and encouraged the hopes I had formed of furthering my fortunes by this acquaintance; and as I left the house I did nothing but meditate on what I had just seen and heard. '*Allah ho akbar**!' exclaimed I to myself, 'are these women? they might pass for viziers and *mastofees*†. Whoever before heard women talking after this manner? What do our women care about the religious feelings of other nations? Do they ever think of learning any language besides their own? And as for the study of history, who is there amongst them who knows the difference between Jemsheed and Shapoor?'

* Great God!

† Secretaries.

CHAPTER IX.

He goes to an English church.—Compares it with his own mosque.—He hears a young preacher.

The next morning I went again to the house of my new friends. It was the English *jumah**. The bells of the churches tolled, people of all kinds, both high and low, thronged the streets, and at a particular hour, as if they were proceeding to the gate of the shah's palace, they rushed to their devotions. 'How much better,' said I to Mary, having made my proper compliments to the family, 'how much better would it not be if your churches were always left open like our mosques? Every person then might suit his own convenience as to time; whereas now only a part of your immense population can be admitted into such buildings. A quiet corner, his carpet, and his *kebleh*, is all a Mussulman requires to say his prayers.'

* The Mohamedan day of rest.

'Our public service,' answered she, 'is regulated by the government.'

'There,' said I, 'we differ; for although our shah be completely despotic, yet he cannot force me to say more *astaferallahs*, or 'God forgive me's', than I like, or to pronounce the *fatheh* at all, unless it is agreeable to me. He does not superintend the washing of my feet, nor the combing of my beard, nor the cutting of my nails; that is all between me and my conscience.'

This conversation took place as we proceeded to the church, previously to which I had made the shake-hand with the father Hogg, and got acquainted with the eldest son. We entered the church in a body, and men and women without distinction were fastened into small square pens. I must own that veils for the women on this occasion were in my mind of urgent necessity, and ought to be enforced by an order from the shah; for who can refrain from looking about him? For my part I could not keep my eyes from wandering

towards the pretty face of the moon-like Bessy, do what I would.

I understood much of what was written in a black book which Mary put into my hands, and with such portions I was much struck; they put me in mind of parts of our blessed Koran; but I was not much edified by the conduct of the congregation. The *peish namaz*, or the leader in prayer, did not himself appear to be in earnest; he neither wagged his head to and fro, as our most saint-like mollahs do; nor did he occasionally keep his body in a state of vibration. As for the people, some looked one way, some another; a few only appeared fervent in prayer, and generally, except being quite quiet, they might as well have been at home. The rich had soft cushions to repose upon, and the poor were provided with more conveniences than at their own houses. Let them go into Mussulman countries, thought I, and there learn true seriousness and devotion. A man will say his prayers in the

midst of the most crowded assembly without turning his head either to the right or the left. He sits on his heels, and wants neither cushions nor footstools, as the Franks do. He requires no book to pray from, for his prayers have been lodged within the chambers of his mind ever since he could be taught to recite them; and when he reads the Koran, the only ceremony necessary is that he washes his hands before he presumes to take up the sacred volume. Now, these Franks, thought I, take up their holy book as if it were any other book; washed or unwashed hands is all one to them. Seeing that every body sat or stood in any position they chose, and did not turn their faces in any particular direction, I asked old Mr. Hogg where was the Christian *kebleh?* but he did not seem to understand me. 'Cobbler!' said he, 'no such person officiates in our churches.'

I made him understand that I alluded to the point to which they turn when they

say their prayers, for I had always supposed that Christians turned towards Jerusalem, in the same manner as we do towards Mecca.

All I could learn from him was that they faced the clergyman when he prayed or preached, and the organ when any chanting was performed.

I saw that the eyes of every one were upon me for talking so much; therefore I wrapt up my curiosity for the present in the folds of silence, and lent a willing ear to the beautiful sounds which proceeded from the organ, for such strains I had never before heard. The singing of children which accompanied it did not strike me as so impressive as some of the fine voices which are sometimes heard from our *muezzins* chanting our profession of faith, and the invitation to prayer from our *minars*, and certainly not to be compared to the magnificent chant of the *khotbeh* *, before the Asylum of the Universe.

* A prayer for the king.

When I thought it time that the ceremony should finish, I was surprised to see a young mollah, whose beard had not yet sprouted, ascend the preaching chair. How could the *reish sefids*, or elders, of whom I saw many in the church, consent to hear the doctrine of one so young? thought I. But my surprise ceased when I saw him draw out a book from his pocket, for he no doubt would preach the doctrine of some celebrated elder, reading it from the manuscript: to suppose that he would venture to speak for himself, appeared to me little less than laughing at the beards of the congregation then assembled.

At length, the whole service being ended, we rose and departed. Had I been a Christian in a Mahomedan mosque, I should have blessed my good fortune that I left it without broken bones; but here, instead of any such apprehension, I only met with approving looks, mixed with expressions of surprise at my extraordinary

appearance. Certainly to behold such a beard as mine, surmounted by a tall black cap, single and solitary, amidst a multitude of shaven chins and uncovered heads, must have been a striking object; and I was surprised that I, in fact, excited such little sensation. The lady Hogg did not lose one opportunity, directly or indirectly, of letting the world know that I was a prince, and had managed to introduce me as such to a long line of her acquaintance even before we had quitted the gates of the church; and, when we had again reached her house, I was reminded of my dignity at every instant.

'Well, prince!' said she, 'how did you like our church?'

I answered, that the service appeared to me too long, and that nobody seemed sufficiently in earnest.

'But, prince, you surely liked our preacher?'

I observed, that he might be very good to look at; but that we Easterns expected

wisdom from a gray-beard and a face of penance, and not from a young *birish*, or no-beard, who might preach the wisdom of Solomon, and the doctrine of the immortal Imam Mousa, till he were black in the face, but nobody would listen to him.

The father Hogg took my side of the argument, and said, "'twas true that he had never tried wisdom out of a beard; but that he always paid most attention when the clergyman preached in a full-bottomed wig.'

What that article might be I did not stop to inquire, for I longed much to be making myself agreeable to the fair Bessy; but her sister, the mollah Mariam, as I called her, would not allow me. Whatever I attempted to say, she always managed to bring me round to religious subjects; and before I could cast my eyes in tender glances at the object of my adoration, I found myself seated before a large book of the law, and engaged in listening to the exhortations of my female converter.

This did not seem to suit the rest of the family more than it did myself, and I was soon invaded by questions from the mamma, who did not cease asking me, whether I knew this great khanum and that great khanum; whether I was going to this ball, or to that assembly; and who always finished by a sigh, which seemed to say, that she wished herself and daughters were more known, and more invited than they were. It was quite plain, that she was desirous to make me the means of producing visits between herself and persons of rank. There was one lady, whose name above the others was frequently repeated, who was apparently a sort of *banoo*, or as they say in India, a *begum*, and from whom the protecting shade of an eyebrow would have been of more value than the gold of the Indies. It was upon the threshold of her gate that they wanted to rub their foreheads, and they would have made me their master of ceremonies, if it had been possible. And the object of this

was to get a passport to that London heaven, Almack's. When I found that it was the angel, Bessy Hogg, who more particularly wished to undertake this enterprise, I must own that Almack's to me also appeared as the promised land of happiness, and immediately I became thoughtful how I might accomplish her desires. The family had already hinted at their extreme desire to become acquainted with the ambassador; but that was just what I wished to avoid. Still I knew it could only be through him that the wishes of my fair one could be accomplished. What to do was very perplexing, and therefore for the present I sealed my lips with the wafers of prudence, and determined to imbue the hinges of my understanding with the oil of ingenuity.

CHAPTER X.

The ambassador visits the India House and the East India Directors.—Hajji Baba meets his new friends.

When I returned home, I found the ambassador taken up in the arrangement of an official visit which he was to make on the following day. It was to the gate of the palace of India, which is situated in a remote part of the city, and contained, from what we heard, a vast number of chambers, in which all the treasures of *Hind*, and *Serendib*, and *Chín** were piled up in endless masses. The whole of the suite were ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and presents suited to the occasion were selected. Among them, as one by which the shah could best show the esteem in which he held the *Coompani*, was a magnificently written and illuminated copy of his majesty's own poetry. It was enclosed in seven

* India, Ceylon, and China.

fine wrappers, to which were added seven coarser, and was to be presented at a fortunate moment by the ambassador's own hands. The former emperors of India were great patrons of poets and fine writing, and it is possible that, in making this present, the shah concluded that the present possessors of that country might be equally so.

The whole subject of this form of government was still so confused in our understandings, that we longed for the time when with our own eyes we might see and comprehend, and be convinced, that the fables we had heard concerning it were unfounded, and that in fact it did truly and undoubtedly exist.

The ambassador had also to present a portrait of our shah, in which he is represented reposing upon the celebrated pillow of pearls, dressed in all the blaze of his magnificent jewels, his beard sweeping his girdle, his eyes so large as scarcely to leave room for cheeks or eyebrows, and his

waist not more than a span in circumference. This we imagined would be esteemed a higher compliment than even the fortunate volume of poetry, particularly as it was the work of that famous artist, Mahomed Naki Shirazi.

The ambassador dressed himself in his superb vest of silver brocade, interwoven with gold flowers. He wore his diamond-headed dagger, and his emerald-belted sword, as well as the pelisse of sable which had so frequently graced the auspicious person of our gracious sovereign. Mohamed Beg was decked out as the master of ceremonies, with a shawl round his cap, red cloth stockings to his feet, and the long staff of office in his hand. I was to be the bearer of the book, until we reached the presence of the assembled body, when the ambassador was to take it into his own hands, in order to deliver it to their chief. Each of us had his particular post, and when collected, we flattered ourselves that the effect would be well worthy of the country we represented.

We proceeded in carriages, and the distance we travelled through the city we computed might be the same as going round the walls of Tehran; the streets were thronged with a population as dense as that seen in our most frequented bazars; we drove through such a complication of carts, waggons, coaches, and wheeled conveyances of all descriptions, that we thought it a miracle to have got safely through it. To this time we had not acquired any accurate idea of the extent of this amazing city. The avenues to the Indian palace were just as crowded as the other streets; and, without going through any outer court, the ambassador descended from his carriage, at a lofty gate, supported by magnificent pillars of marble, and entered at once into the body of the building. Every corridor was lined with troops beautifully dressed and armed, and music was not wanting to announce our arrival. He was met by several persons, who complimented him in the name of the Indian government,

and conducted him, followed by his suite, through long and intricate passages, until we reached a large apartment. Here we saw twenty-four chairs, and twenty-four Franks seated upon them; and these we were told were the *Coompani*. The chief sat upon a higher chair than the rest, and his *vakeel*, or deputy, upon another. To the former the ambassador addressed himself, presenting at the same time the auspicious volume from the king of kings. As we proceeded to divest it of its coverings, the four-and-twenty sitters upon chairs opened their eyes to behold the royal gift, and their impatience evidently increased in proportion as each cover balked their expectation. At length, when we had come to the last, and when I uncovered the book, the faces of many of the lookers-on dropped with disappointment, for evidently they expected to see something more precious. ''Tis only a book !' was heard to pass from mouth to mouth, and then they all resumed their seats.

I perceived that the ambassador was in no wise pleased at the little sensation which his offering had produced; for instead of receiving it with both his hands, and carrying it to his head, as we should have done, the chief chair-sitter took it in his right hand, made two or three bows, and said a few words, which the mehmandar interpreted into a long speech. It was then transferred to the *vakeel*, who again passed it to his neighbour, and thus it went in succession to the whole four-and-twenty. I remarked that the greater part of them turned the book upside down; and I said to Mohamed Beg, that if our shah had known into whose hands this precious produce of his brain had fallen, he never would have been at so much trouble to send it so far in search of admirers.

The portrait of the shah was then brought in and exhibited. As soon as it was extended in full length, the ambassador thought it necessary to approach it and make a prostration, as if his majesty

in person were present, and this example we immediately followed. But not a chair-sitter moved a muscle; they looked on at the ceremony we had performed in apparent astonishment, for I dare say not one of them could understand to what a degree a Persian carries his respect and veneration for his sovereign.

The ambassador was then invited to visit different parts of the great house, in order that he might more easily comprehend the nature of the business which was there transacted. He was informed that the troops which he saw drawn out to do him honour were composed of men who worked in their warehouses. 'Ah,' said the ambassador, 'if you can make sepoys of your miserable Hindoos, there can be no difficulty in turning your porters into soldiers*!'

* The Persians hold our Indians in contempt as soldiers; a contempt which must have originated in the conquests so easily achieved by their famous Nadir Shah.

We then saw the treasury; then were conducted to a large hall surrounded by benches, where, on certain occasions, every man can get up and speak his mind. We were paraded through numerous *defter khanehs* and offices, which showed the immensity of the business transacted by these merchant kings, as Mohamed Beg very aptly called them, and at length were introduced into a beautifully ornamented apartment called the *kitab khaneh*, or the library.

On our arrival here we were delighted to find, in addition to the interesting furniture of the room, a crowd of handsomely-dressed ladies. As the ambassador entered they pressed forward to look at us, and the principal ones were introduced to him. To my astonishment, and, I may add, dismay, I espied among them my friends the Hoggs, the old mother, the three daughters, and the father. How to support the exalted character which I had established among them, and to preserve my humble

station near the ambassador, I was convinced would be a work of difficulty. I at first determined not to appear to see them, but soon found that that scheme would be unavailable. The old lady would not let me off so easily; for, whatever the others might do, she certainly would claim her prince for an acquaintance. And I was not mistaken, for she made up to me in great joy, and shook hands with me, to the astonishment of my companions. The ambassador, for my good luck, had been taken to the farther end of the room to see some of the curiosities, and therefore did not witness this joyous meeting. We, also, his attendants, were very soon mixed up with the crowd, and being kindly and officiously taken notice of both by the Hoggs and others of the company, my intimacy with my new friends passed by almost unheeded. The old lady, I perceived, was very anxious to be paraded up at the head of her daughters, to be introduced to the ambassador, according to the

Frangi mode; but I evaded her wish by saying, that it was so entirely against our customs for a man to be the master of ceremonies to women, and to head a string of them, as if he were about to sell slaves in the bazar, that I declined the office, particularly on so public an occasion as this.

Having got rid of this question for the moment, although I was fully aware that no old woman, the mamma Hogg included, would give up her object on so flimsy an excuse, I willingly devoted myself to 'the father of Hoggs,' *peder ghoraza*, as I called him, and he attempted to explain the various curiosities which were displayed. They were almost entirely Eastern. They were called curiosities in this country, although to us they were the familiar objects of common life.

The books were quite beyond the comprehension of my guide. They were under the direction of an old Frank mirza, a very learned man, so my conductor informed me, who was now doing the duties of his

office, by showing the collection to the ambassador. I remarked from the titles of some of them that they were rare and expensive. My friend was anxious to show me all the trophies taken from Tippoo Sultan—his throne—his arms, and parts of his dress; there were also many of the spoils of other Indian chiefs, such as swords, spears, bows and arrows, and shields in abundance. The father Hogg was very anxious to exhibit a handsome sword, which he insisted had belonged to a famous Turk, one 'Captain Packer,' as he called him. I was puzzled, for I had never before heard or read of this chief; but upon reading the label on the scabbard, as well as the inlaid inscription on the blade, I discovered that it had been wielded by a well-known Turkish admiral, a celebrated *Capoudan Pacha*.

'*Barikallah!* praises be to Allah,' thought I to myself: 'if you, O Hogg! are the sort of stuff of which they make

kings of Hindustan, what a wonderful government this must be!'

I had not failed every now and then to cast furtive glances at the fair Bessy as she stood in the crowd, but I dared not speak to her, fearful of being remarked by my countrymen. She was escorted by a young whiskered infidel, whose attentions to her did not at all suit the scheme of rapid fortune and enjoyment which I had drawn out for myself; and I began to doubt whether my well-preserved beard, my crisped *zoulfs*, and my narrow waist, however precious they might be in my own eyes—whether they would prevail against the whiskers of the youth, his pigeon breast, his curled head, and, above all, a certain pair of long spurs to his heels, which I had been assured by some of the English 'no-beards' were a shorter cut to a woman's heart than any spell or charm which we Persians might possess. I had heard of silk stockings having been used as talis-

mans in Persia to secure love, but never of spurs. It was a good thing to know, and accordingly I made a minute of it in my mind to be used on the first occasion.

I was about making a speech to the moon-face, and had put a dozen or two of my prettiest English words together for the occasion, when there was a hurry-scurry in the room which announced the departure of the ambassador; and we had collected ourselves together to follow him in due order, when, just as we were taking our leave, I saw the mother Hogg bustling through the crowd; and when she had got sufficiently near me, she screamed out, 'Recollect, prince, you dine with us to-morrow.'

It was lucky that none amongst us saw from whom these words came; but the ambassador turned round to me and said, 'Prince! who does that mean?'

'What do I know, O Mirza?' said I.

CHAPTER XI.

The Persians remark upon what they have seen.—Mirza Firouz receives news from Persia.—He rejoices.—Hajji Baba laments.

When we had reached home, we collected round the ambassador, as we were wont to do, in his *dewan khaneh*, or receiving apartment, until he dismissed us. But before he did this he frequently indulged himself in talking upon such things as we had seen, or upon our own country and families.

On this occasion, addressing himself to me, he exclaimed, 'My soul, Hajji, how did you fare to-day; in what light did you see all these strange things which came before us?'

I answered after our usual mode, '*aib ne dared*, there is no harm. *Bad neest*, it was not bad.'

'Now,' said he, 'now we know what

the 'Coompani' means. We must immediately make out a representation to the foot of the throne of what we have seen, and state, with care and precision, whatever this day has ascended into our understandings, or has met our eye. Such are the commands of the king of kings.'

'By my eyes,' said I, 'I will write down every thing that I have seen, and make plain all that I have understood; not even a pair of shagreen slippers * which belonged to Shah Abbas shall escape me. However, I will not conceal from you that it occurred to me, and perhaps in my ignorance I am wrong, that the head of one wise man would be worth the collected knowledge of the twenty-four chair-sitters, if they were all like the fat merchant with whom I had happened to converse.'

'Perhaps you have said right,' said the

* *Cufsh sagri* I have translated shagreen slippers; the word shagreen being probably derived from sagri. Sagri is the skin of the wild ass's back.

ambassador; 'but, for my part, I spoke with one or two men to-day who, in truth, possess wonderful wits of their own; men done to a turn—men with universal knowledge; who can better tell how many hairs exist in the shah's beard than either you or I. By your head, Hajji, they asked me some questions which required me to put my trust in Allah when I endeavoured to answer them. I am at a loss to account for all I see. Where could they possibly have acquired such knowledge?'

'On the other hand,' said I, 'I was puzzled by a question or two, which a wild ass on the salt desert would have been ashamed to ask. Having first remarked on the brownness of our complexions, one inquired whether we bred any *caca siahs*, or black brothers*, in our country; another, whether we did not worship the cow†.'

* So negroes are generally called in Persia.

† Evidently confounding the *Persians* with the *Parsees*.

'Another positively affirmed,' said Mohamed Beg, 'that our famous Tahmas Kouli Khan was an Irishman; that his proper name was Thomas O'Calleghan, which we had adopted in our own language; and that subsequently we had called him Nadir Shah.'

'That might have been ignorance or impertinence,' said the Mirza. 'This I know, that those to whom I had the luck to speak were men of knowledge. The old mirza who has the care of the library made me stare with astonishment at some of the books he produced; books which even our shah does not possess, and which only could have belonged to the conquerors of India. The mehmandar assured me that he was a very learned man; and in truth, from what I heard him say, which he did in our own language, he must be a mollah, of whom there can be few the like in the world.'

'The mollahs of this country compared with our men of the law!' said Abbas Beg,

the mirakhor, contemptuously; 'what can they pretend to?'

'Yes,' said Mohamed Beg, 'for science and learning we must go to Irân. I have not heard of one astrologer in England, and I doubt whether the best of them could make an almanack.'

'What do you know about science and learning, blockheads?' exclaimed the ambassador. 'You have only read your own books; but see, these people have read both ours and theirs! By your soul, I swear, that the old mirza whom I saw to-day is the father of all the mollahs and mirzas in Irân. Who ever heard of one of our *ullemahs* being the master of ten languages?'

'That is very true,' argued Mohamed Beg; 'but allow me to represent that in matters of religion, and for a proper explanation of the *Ahadis*, or the five thousand two hundred and sixty-six sayings of our holy Prophet, (upon whom be blessing!) there is no one like the most learned Hajji Mohamed, the *mushtehed* of Kom.'

'O man!' exclaimed the ambassador in triumph, 'what has the mushtehed of Kom, or our religion, or the sayings of our holy Prophet, to do with the English? They are infidels, man; they say that our blessed *Peghember** is no such personage; that our Koran is principally taken from the writings of the bankrupt Jews, and of their own scriptures;—they pray for our conversion in their churches.'

Upon this Mohamed Beg stroked his beard, blew over both his shoulders, and murmured his profession of faith in a low voice, whilst the ambassador continued.

'Not all the mushteheds who have ever flourished in Persia could make these people change their opinions. On the contrary, they are daily sending their own padrés into our countries laden with bibles, to persuade us to forsake our faith, and to take up their own. After that, talk of your mushteheds! As for our Koran, they have

* The prophet Mahomed.

translations of it, so close and perfect, that if you are anxious to know what knowledge they possess, go ask the mirza whom we saw to-day any question concerning it, and see what an answer he would give you. *Allah, Allah!* he would make your soul jump out of any given hole in your body!'

'After all,' exclaimed I, 'it is most certain that for wealth, power, learning, and ingenuity, this is a most extraordinary nation.'

'Yes,' said the ambassador, laughing, 'even to our neighbours and allies, the *Coompani*.'

'By your beard,' said I, 'they are more difficult to be understood than any thing we have yet seen in it. You must own, O Mirza! that what came under our knowledge to-day in no manner answers to the magnificence of their possessions in India.'

'True, you say, Hajji; by my child's head! by the beard of Fath Ali Shah! you have spoken wisely. What affinity

can there be between the dark, smoky, dingy mansion we saw this morning, and the celebrated palaces of Agra and Delhi? And where shall we ever find the brilliancy of the throne of the emperors of Hind, and all the consequence of the great Mogul dynasty, in the twenty-four elderly gentlemen seated on chairs in a back room in Leadenhall-street, for so the mehmandar called their palace?'

'Well spoken, by my head,' exclaimed I. 'How shall we ever make the worthies at the king's gate at Tehran understand this, is more than I can say. We must speak of what we have seen, and then put our trust in Allah!'

We had scarcely said these words when a messenger from the gate of the English king was introduced, and delivered to the ambassador a large packet of letters and imperial firmans from the foot of the throne of our king of kings. We continued in the room whilst, with the greatest trepidation and in silent anxiety, he inspected

their contents. He first opened the one from his confidential servant, and before he had read two lines of it, he threw it from him, exclaiming in extravagant joy, '*Al ham dulillah!* God be praised! God be praised! At length in his mercy he has conferred a blessing upon us. That old dog Mirza Sheffi is dead!' Without more ado he went into a corner, knelt down, and did what he had long omitted to do; he said his prayers.

We all looked at each other in astonishment. I was obliged to shout '*Al ham dulillah!*' with the rest of them, although in truth I ought to have wept, for by the death of our grand vizier I lost my chief protector at court, and the principal security for the continuance of the ambassador's kindness to me.

As soon as he had finished his prayers, he gave way to the most lively joy; he scarcely gave himself time to run over the contents of his letters. Every other idea was absorbed in this great fact; he was

freed from the bitterest and most powerful of his enemies; and his own friends and relations would now get into power. At every moment, when he could stop himself in the midst of his rhapsodies, he exclaimed, 'Mirza Sheffi is dead!' and for the rest of the day these words were found playing about his lips, as bees are apt to loiter round a favourite flower.

I had not much time at present to reflect how this event was likely to influence my future views, but I soon discovered that the ambassador's manner was altered. He had hitherto preserved a show of respect towards me, because he looked upon me as one protected by the highest authority, though placed about his person as a spy on his actions; but now I discovered a tone of raillery and exultation in what he said to me, which required all my prudence to meet with becoming moderation.

'At last your father is gone,' said he to me, before I left the room; 'the old un-

clean dog is dead. It has happened fortunately for you. No luck could last as long as it was attached to the fortunes of such an old piece of carrion. The shah has become possessor of all his property. Every thing he possessed, all that he had stolen, extorted, and amassed in his warehouses, is gone to the shah's gate. His slaves have been distributed among the king's sons and the *omrahs;* and his Georgians have been provided for in the royal household. It is well that you were here, Hajji, or else you too would have been disposed of.'

'I hope your condescension will never be less,' said I. 'If I have lost a friend, I hope that I have still one left in you.'

'Go, go,' said he, 'make your mind easy. We have overlooked all the past. We are not one who shows a beard of two colours, who one day blows hot and the other cold. We are not lookers-on at the weather.'

CHAPTER XII.

Hajji Baba dines with an English citizen.—Of the persons he meets.

I WAS so much taken up with writing on the following day, that I became apprehensive lest I should not be able to slip away, unperceived by the ambassador, to eat the long projected dinner at my friends the Hoggs, for the fortunate hour was at length at hand. However, something most opportunely occurred which put me and my despatches completely out of the ambassador's head; and as I stepped from the door to fulfil my engagement, I said '*Shukur khoda*, thanks be to Allah,' and gave my whiskers a fresh twist.

I did not omit to make my person as agreeable as possible. My old Persian shirts, both silk and cotton, had been renewed by some brilliantly white ones made

by an English sempstress; for, after a hundred thousand difficulties, I had at length extracted from my chief sufficient money to buy myself some new linen, a handsome *caba*, and, for the first time, I treated my feet to a pair of silken socks. I passed my time on my way in building a castle relative to my future destinies. Could I but succeed to gain the moon-faced Bessy Hogg for my bride, I would snap my fingers at fate, and live independent for the rest of my life of ambassadors, shahs, and governments. As I stepped up to the gate of the house, my foot stumbled, and that circumstance struck me as an omen of ill luck. I waited a long while ere the door was opened to me, which also discomposed me. At length it was opened by a man with much white dust on his head, apparently in a great hurry, and who it seems had not had time to put on his coat. Another, equally in a hurry, eyeing me well from head to foot, accompanied me up stairs, and when we had

reached the great room, instead of being received by any one of the family, I found a servant maid bustling about, altering the position of chairs, rubbing tables, and beating up cushions. 'What news may this be?' thought I. 'Perhaps this is not the day; or I am come too soon! We shall see.' If I had been in Persia, waiting for the master of the house, I should have seated myself in the lowest place, and taken advantage of the solitude to say my '*God forgive me's*,' and to have counted my beads; but here, where there is no lowest place, I did not know exactly how and where to dispose of my person. However, in order to recall some ideas of our own customs, and seeing a small carpet before the fire-place, precisely the same as those which we use for saying prayers upon, I there knelt down, took out my rosary, and said my *fatteh*, and began upon a hundred and one *astaferallahs*. I was occasionally interrupted by some one putting their head within the door, and drawing it

out hastily again before I could see who it was. At length I heard a knocking, and, tired of waiting, I looked out of the window, and there saw the father of Hoggs dismounting from his horse very deliberately. 'It is evident,' said I, 'we don't count by the same watches. Either my luck is on the turn, and I have missed the fortunate hour, or the inhabitants of this house are totally unmindful of times and places.' Very soon after I was relieved by another loud knock, and in great form a servant announced some event which I could not understand, when, lo! a *khanum* dressed in plumes, a young lady, an elderly gentleman, and another fresh-looking man, walked into the apartment. They all looked at me in various ways; the *khanum* smirked, the young virgin gazed at me with a little glass instrument which she applied occasionally to her eye, the old man looked at me with indifference, the other as if he would speak to me; but instead of accosting me, the four adjourned

to a window and whispered to each other. But immediately after this in rushed the mamma Hogg, followed by her daughters, each in various stages of haste, talking all together, and making many speeches to apologise for not being ready. They then in a body bounded towards me, and 'Prince!' in various intonations, was echoed amongst them, asking me sundry questions, fearing that I had been long waiting, and at length making me known to the persons who had just arrived. I saw that the fresh-looking man was a stranger, and he was introduced to the lady of the house by the elderly gentleman. He was then brought up to me, and I was told that he was a very learned man, a professor of many languages, among others of Persian, but that his great strength lay in Chinese.

I thought that I had seen the elderly gentleman before, and, in truth, I recognised in him one of the four-and-twenty sitters on chairs at the Indian palace. Mrs. Hogg then whispered to me that he

was called a nabob, because he had been long in India, and had returned very rich; and that he had brought the learned man with him in order that he might converse with me, and interpret to the company what I might say. This *mollah* (for so I shall call him) then made an attempt to make me a complimentary speech in Persian, which I could not in the least understand, and during the whole of the evening, although I often spoke to him, I never could extract more than '*belli sahib*, yes, sir.' More company came at distant intervals, and, by turns, I was presented to a doctor of physic, a lawyer, and a *bînbashi*, or colonel, commanding one thousand sepoys.

Every body seemed ready to dine, but a lord was expected, one of the *ameers*, and both the father and the mother Hogg agreed that it would be unlucky to begin without him. Whilst we were all in anxious expectation for his arrival, a knock was heard, every body exclaimed 'Praises to the prophet, here he is!' when in walked

the young whiskered beau who had excited my jealousy with regard to the fair Bessy, and who had either been overlooked or unexpected. He seemed to be amazingly well pleased with himself. His salutations consisted of nods; his speech was confined to slight lisps; he looked with complacency at his feet; he appeared uncomfortable about the throat; and he never seemed satisfied with the attitude he had taken on his legs. He soon did what I had been longing to do. He immediately proceeded to perform the ceremony of wagging the elbow with the virgin, and talked with her and her sisters as if no dinner was in expectation. At length, after another half hour's waiting, the absent lord became present. He was made as much of as if there had been but one *ameer* in the world. The father Hogg first, then the mother after him, presented him to their daughters. He was soon informed that I was a prince, at which he appeared

happy; but the rest of the guests were not put under the shadow of his condescension. Whatever might have been his pretensions, however high he might have stood among the nobles of the land, he was more humble, more of a dervish in his appearance than any one present, and instead of a general puffing up of manner, which the other guests seemed to have adopted, he was not long in producing amongst them a tone of quiet and unpretending civility. He was under no sort of restraint himself; the others evidently were; and even the mamma Hogg, who naturally was all over inquisitiveness, officiousness, and ambition, now lowered her tone, and looked like a sitter in a corner.

At length the door opened, and the ceremony of walking to dinner was performed: it took much time. It was settled that I should hand the wife of the master of the house to table. The master himself took down the wife of the nabob;

and the lord was the conductor of one of the daughters. The others followed as they could.

The table presented a scene worthy of the riches of a king. There were as many glasses, cups, bottles, china, and curiosities as would fit up the *taukchehs** of the shah's largest room. Of candles and lamps not even the *Gulistan*† lighted up could boast more. I was seated in the place of honour, on the right hand of the lady of the house—(who would believe that in Persia!) On the other side sat the lord; near me was posted the *mollah,* that depositary of oriental and other languages, in order to interpret what I might not be able to understand. In the neighbourhood were the doctor and the lawyer; but the object of my desires, the rose-bud round which the nightingale of my heart was ever fluttering, was placed

* Niches, common to all Persian apartments.

† One of the king of Persia's pleasure-houses.

far away, and, in turning my head to my right, I every now and then caught a glimpse of her nose, not without, at the same time, and in the same line, encountering the hated nose and moustache of my rival.

The *ameer* said little, but was very civil to his neighbour, the mamma Hogg, who almost exclusively devoted herself to him, leaving me to the *mollah*. The Indian chair-sitter talked much of India, of nawabs, of curries, of crores of rupees. Every thing, in his calculation, seemed to be fixed at so many rupees per month. His wife, who was seated next to the master of the feast, being without the immediate influence of the *ameer*, exhibited all the splendour of her attire. Her arms groaned under the weight of talismans, her neck bore heavier chains than those of our dervishes, and she drank as much wine as any one of the shah's most active dancing women. The principal sign of recognition that passed between me and the man Hogg was

the ceremonial of wine, by which much of the friendship, and even the policy, of the English is regulated. To drink wine with a man here is almost equivalent to eating salt with him in Persia. I also established the foundation of a friendship with the other men guests by drinking wine with them, which shows how favourably inclined to strangers this nation is, seeing that they were the first to invite me to go through the ceremony.

The doctor evidently was a man of great wisdom. Every body lent a ready ear to what he said, for he gave a detailed and particular account of the nature of each dish at table. Some he prescribed as totally forbidden; others he barely allowed to be tasted; there were about two which he said might lawfully be the food of man. He, however, eat of every one himself; and but few of the guests seemed deterred by his words from eating of what they liked. He asked me several questions respecting our food; he went further—he

inquired what might be our medicines principally in cases of disordered stomach.

I was at a loss what to answer; for there appeared to me a necessity to use some of my best cloaked words on the occasion. I made several attempts to explain myself in English; nobody could understand me. I recollected the scrape into which the ambassador had got with the *khanum*, and became doubly guarded. At length recourse was had to the *mollah*, and he was asked to interpret what I said. I told him that in cases of indigestion we generally used the *destour*. He boggled at this evidently; but fearful lest his knowledge of Persian should be called into question, he announced to the doctor that we used 'the custom of the country.' This puzzled matters the more, until the nabob himself came to my assistance, and he answered the questions of the doctor, after a form of words of which I was totally ignorant.

In the mean while, the *mollah* grew confused and evidently much dissatisfied with

himself; when, looking at the back of his plate, to his joy, he there discovered some Chinese characters, and in triumph, volunteered to give the meaning of them. Having previously ascertained my ignorance of that language, he gave a long explanation, which seemed to satisfy every body of his profound learning, and restored to himself the equilibrium which he had lost.

By this time we had made great progress through the dinner; a general remove had taken place, and the servants handed about certain sticks of a green sort of herb. I looked at the dish, but refused to eat thereof; the mother Hogg, however, pressed me over and over again not to let them pass; and, at length, by way of an overpowering reason, she assured me that they had cost a great deal of money.

'*If dear thing best, ma'am,*' said I, '*better eat tomauns**; *better eat Cashmere shawls.*'

* The gold coin of Persia.

This made the *ameer* laugh, and he very soon showed his good feeling by going through the wine ceremony with me.

The lawyer had asked several questions concerning our laws, and he was surprised to find that Mussulmans had no other code than that of the Koran. 'But, surely,' said he, 'you must have lawyers as well as priests? How can a country exist without lawyers?'

I answered that we had different gradations of expounders of the law; and whether they were called priests or lawyers, it came to the same thing. 'Then,' said I, in my English, '*you, sir, you tell law—what law you tell?*'

'I am a barrister, at your service,' said he.

'*You no judge,* sir—*you no cazi?*'

'No,' said he, 'I am not come to that yet.'

'*Ah!*' then said I, '*you no ride white ass?*'

To this he made no reply; but seemed rather disconcerted when he heard every body laughing at what I had said in sober earnest, and which I endeavoured to explain to him was a dignity enjoyed principally by our great *mollahs*, inasmuch as white asses, and even white mules, are looked upon as rare and precious animals.

When every thing was over, the women, as usual, retired, and the men remained to drink. I released myself as soon as possible from the table, determined to make an effort to speak to 'that coy and tender fawn' who had hitherto eluded my attentions, and resolved to try whether my well-organised beard would not bear down the insignificant whiskers of the long-spurred infidel. On returning to the hall of audience, I found her preparing hot sherbet for the company, and during this operation I managed to slip into her hand a copy of verses, in which the strength of my passion was avowed. I pretended that I had

written out a Persian lesson, and told her that if she could not decipher it by herself, I would willingly explain it at her first leisure.

She seemed very much pleased, and assured me that it should have a conspicuous place in her album. I did not know what album meant, nor did I ask; but consoling myself by the idea that it meant either her heart or her breast, or some such tender signification, my head touched the skies, and I was almost inclined to cut myself all over with my dagger in her presence, in order to show the violence of my love. But at this moment *Long-spurs* came up to where we stood, and endeavoured to conciliate me by offering to share a snuff-box with me. I was too suspicious of his intentions to accept any thing from him; and as I now felt that I had, in fact, gained a strong position in the affections of the fair Bessy, I abandoned the field to him, and took my departure,

notwithstanding the entreaties of the mamma and the other ladies to play at various games. 'Ah!' said I, leaving the room, 'having played at love, my heart rejects all other pastime.'

CHAPTER XIII.

Honours prove troublesome to Hajji Baba; and he receives striking *marks of the ambassador's displeasure.—He dreads a rebellion in England.*

I PASSED the whole of the next day in thinking of my love, and writing verses on her perfections. I saw little of the ambassador, who I believe was taken up with nearly a similar occupation in the service of his own charmer; but on the following morning I received a summons to attend him.

I found him walking about the room like a Frank, with one of those large daily sheets in his hand common to England, which he had been reading with his master. As soon as I appeared, he roared out, 'For the love of Allah! tell me, besides ourselves, are there any mad *Irânis* in this country?'

'What know I, O Mirza?' was my answer. 'Perhaps there may be.'

'Who is this,' pointing to the paper, said he, 'who is this dog's son who calls himself prince Hajji Baba? Read, by your soul, read, and see what a dish of filth this lie-speaking paper has been eating.'

I looked at the paper, and there, to my dismay, I read, with the help of the master, in a large column, a long account of the dinner I had eaten at the father of Hoggs, in which I was designated, in large characters, as 'his highness prince Mirza Hajji Baba.' Every body's name was there in the fullest detail. I copied it afterwards in my journal, in order to possess a specimen of that extraordinary custom peculiar to the English, of making a public register of their dinners, and of the people whom they feed. What would the Arab, in his tent, think of such sort of hospitality, he who kills the fatted lamb for his guests, and lives upon parched corn himself? The writing was thus:—

'*Mr. and Mrs. Hogg's grand entertain-*

ment, Portland-place.—These distinguished fashionables gave a superb entertainment to his highness the Persian prince, Mirza Hajji Baba. The table was ornamented with devices emblematical of the friendship that exists between England and Persia. The English lion and the Persian sun were seen shaking hands together in a beautiful transparency. It would be needless to describe the magnificence of the dinner; it is sufficient to say that it consisted of all the luxuries of the season. His highness was observed to eat much of some of the finest asparagus that ever was seen, provided by Messrs. Peas and Beans, of Bond-street, which cost five guineas the hundred. Among the company to meet his highness, we remarked Lord Softly, Sir Henry and Lady Curry, the famous Chinese philosopher, Ho-Ho, besides a long list of the haut ton.'

'Well, have you read?' said the ambassador to me, whilst I was considering what answer to make.

'Yes,' said I, hesitating, 'I have read.

Strange customs have these English! Nobody can eat a mouthful in this country without its being proclaimed abroad, even more publicly than the profession of our faith is proclaimed from the tops of our mosques.'

'In fine,' said the ambassador, 'you will not confess that you, and you only, are the prince who so worthily have been feeding with the Hoggs. Go, go, you have found friends worthy of you.'

'It is not my fault,' said I, 'if I am called a prince. If these blockheads, who write whatever comes into their heads, were to choose to call me the angel Michael, could I hinder them?'

'Go,' said the ambassador, as his anger rose, 'go, speak no more. A person who makes friends under a false character, who gives himself out for a king's son, and who secretly lives and feeds with unclean beasts, such a person deserves to be blown from the mouth of a bomb. After all, man, I am somebody here; our shah is some-

body. Our beards are not to be at a discount because the barber's son of Ispahan chooses to make a personage of himself.'

'*Wallah, billah!*' exclaimed I. 'By Allah, Mirza, I have done nothing in this. If I have committed an offence in eating a dinner, I acknowledge it. If my friend's name happens to be that of the unclean beast, it is not my fault; it was my evil destiny to make his acquaintance. I am a barber's son, 'tis true, but why should I be blown from the mouth of a bomb? Why are you so *kem shefukat*, so little kind, towards me?'

By this time, words running high between us, two or three of the servants had slipped into the room and stood before their master, whilst the English teacher, seeing a storm impending, hastily took his departure.

'*Mashallah!* praises to Allah,' said the ambassador mockingly to Seid, the black slave, and Taki, the ferash: 'see, see, this is a *shah zadeh*, a prince!' pointing to me.

'Make your lowest prostration to him. We are nobody now! We are the least of the least before him!'

'What words are these?' said I, becoming angry in my turn. 'Why do you speak to me thus? If you were to live more with us, and less with the infidels, I should not be reduced to seek refuge among the Hoggs.'

'Do you address me in this manner?' roared the ambassador, his face becoming livid with rage, and every hair of his beard distended. 'Have you forgotten who I am, you less than man? Your old cow of a vizier is no longer in existence, that you should give yourself such airs, remember that! The son of a barber may be a prince in England, but he will be less than a dog's barber when he returns to Persia. Go, go,' said he, with a most contemptuous toss of his hand, 'go about your business, and do not venture to see me again.'

'Would to Heaven that I could!' said I, as I was stepping out of the room; but

these last words blew up his fury to its height, and, screaming with rage, he invoked the servants who stood before him, 'He speaks again! Seize, seize him, Seid! Taki! seize that son of a dog, and give him the shoe. You 'll speak again, will you? You, whose father's grave I have defiled!'

Upon which he, the ambassador, rushed at me, shoe in hand, and gave me two or three blows on the mouth with the heel of it, whilst Seid and Taki held my hands. I immediately made a rapid descent, they after me, until I reached the door of the house, which I opened, and in another second found myself in the middle of the street.

'Where can I go now?' thought I. 'There is no sanctuary to fly to; I cannot take refuge in a hot bath, as I could in Tehran. Beside the Hoggs, whom do I know here? And if I were to appear before them, as an outcast instead of a prince, would they take me in?' I wandered about the city for several hours, at one time de-

ploring my hard fate, and making unfeasible plans of returning to Persia; at another enlivening my present misery by hopes of future good fortune, and of becoming independent of every thing by the possession of the moon-faced Bessy.

I was quietly proceeding along one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, when I perceived a great mass of troops in full march, accompanied by several pieces of artillery, escorted by an immense mob of the dirtiest of the English, who were rending the air with abusive words, and occasionally assaulting the soldiers with stones. I remarked that consternation appeared in the faces of some, whilst others appeared totally unconcerned.

'What news is this?' said I, to a man who had just stepped out of his shop to see the sight.

'Oh,' said he, 'I believe they are going to take up a man*.'

* This evidently alludes to Sir Francis Burdett's visit to the Tower in 1810.

'Only a man?' said I. 'If you require this force to take a man, what must you require to take a city?' I was so impressed with this strange scene, that I thought no more of my private miseries, but immediately returned to my home in all haste. I felt that the ambassador ought to know the state of things. The firmans from the shah, which we had lately received, and which I had read, had given him such positive instructions to ascertain what were the means of this country, and its stability as a government, that to let him be ignorant of what seemed to me an indication of its ruin, would be shameful neglect. Perhaps too, thought I, he may forget what has so recently happened, and may take me into favour again. At all events, even at the risk of getting more blows on the mouth, I'll tell him into what a state this country has fallen; and if the rebellion, which has evidently begun, is not put down, he will see the necessity of providing for our safety.

I soon found myself at home again, but the ambassador was out. My countrymen were so accustomed themselves to be beaten, to receive the shoe-heel on their mouths, and to be otherwise molested, that they scarcely took notice of what had befallen me. Mohamed Beg alone felt for me, and partook of my misfortune. We talked the matter over, sighing as he expressed a wish that we were all safe in Iran again. When I told him what I had just witnessed in the streets, that it was evident, from the warlike preparations which I had remarked, and from what the man told me when I had questioned him, that some khan or governor was *yaghi*, that is, had become a rebel, and that we possibly might be implicated in danger and bloodshed, he turned pale, and said two or three *astaferallah's* in a breath. We both of us became anxious for the return of the ambassador, in order that no delay should take place to inform him of the aspect of affairs; and we began

to calculate how soon we might begin our journey back whence we came.

'I fear,' said Mohamed Beg, 'that it was an unlucky hour when we left the infidel Smirna; for it has always been upon my mind, that had we only remained there a week longer, there would have been one of the most fortunate conjunctions of the planets that can exist in the heavens. But that bankrupt mehmandar, curse on his beard! hurried us away against every law, human or divine, and see what has happened! A rebellion amongst the infidels! The loss, perhaps, of our lives; or the being carried away as slaves by the conquering party! What shall we do, O Hajji?'

I endeavoured to console him by assuring him that the danger was not so imminent perhaps as he thought; that the king of England had power in his hand; that he was evidently a strong prince, and an owner of ships and guns; and that by the blessing of Allah he might overthrow

the rebel khan, who was now disturbing his government. If he could once catch him, by cutting off his head, and putting his family, wives, children, and relations, to death, no doubt, as in our own country, every thing would soon get into its old train again.

'*Inshallah! Inshallah!* Please Allah!' exclaimed Mohamed Beg, with a deep sigh—'*Inshallah!*'

CHAPTER XIV.

He makes his peace with Mirza Firouz.—Excites in him certain apprehensions concerning the state of England, and the security of her finances.

As soon as the ambassador returned, Mohamed Beg, as concerted between us, appeared before him, and with conciliatory words informed him, that I was in waiting to unfold certain matters of consequence.

The whole of the morning's wrath appeared to have passed from him, and with the all-cheering recollection in his mind of the death of his enemy, which acted upon his ill-humour like sunshine upon the damps of a cavern, he was now quite composed, and his spirits were well up. I was summoned before him, and his reception of me was after the following manner:—

'What has happened, Hajji?'

'I beg to represent, for the good of your service,' said I, 'that I have seen certain things to-day in this city which are necessary should be known to you. Men are in rebellion, troops have arrived, guns are brought in, and it is evident that something is in agitation, which will require us to put our trust in God.'

'Is that all?' said the ambassador, holding up his fore-finger in derision: 'Ay, *barikallah!* ay, well done, prince! thou art a man of observation, and an understander of things. Do you weigh these infidels in the same scale that you would ourselves? Don't you know that the cap which would fit them will not fit us?'

'What do we know?' said Mohamed Beg, taking my part. 'A rebel is a rebel, be he in whatever country he may; and a man's head may fly off by the scimitar of an infidel, as well as by that of a true believer.'

'Go, make yourselves easy,' said the ambassador, 'nothing will happen to us,

whatever may to the English. I have had much conversation with the vizier, and he has explained to me, that the commotions which occasionally take place in this country are quite necessary to its well-being.'

'Such perhaps may be the case,' said I, 'in all countries. The tyranny of Aga Mohamed Shah became insupportable to Persia, and he was put to death. We are come here to make treaties and agreements with the king of England; if he were to lose his life, how do we know whether his successors would ratify them? Before we go further, I who am the least of your servants, would recommend you to inquire more narrowly into the state of this country, and the stability of the present shah's throne.'

'You do not speak ill,' said the ambassador: 'where is the mehmandar? let us ask him, what does all this mean? Whatever he says you will duly write down, and by the next letters sent to the shah's

gate at Tehran, we will detail all that has happened, and give in a few words a full account of the government of this country.'

'It is indeed necessary that our eyes should be kept open, O Mirza!' said I. 'For in addition to the symptoms of rebellion and disaffectedness which are showing themselves, I have heard that this country is so much oppressed by debt, and the creditors are becoming so clamorous to be paid, that sooner or later the whole administration must break up, and those who have lent will fall to pellmell, and get back their property in the best way they can.'

'Is it so? what do you say? what news is this? what sort of government is this? I am full of astonishment. How is it possible for a state to be in debt? The king takes what is necessary from his people, and there is an end to it. Go, for God's sake, and inquire.' All this was

said in a breath; and now that the ambassador's curiosity was excited, every other object was forgotten until it was satisfied.

At this moment entered the mehmandar, and the shower of questions which the ambassador immediately poured over him so astonished him, that he looked liked one drenched, whose breathing and power of utterance were taken from him.

'*Sahib mun*, my sir,' said Mirza Firouz, 'for the love of your mother, inform us of a few things. What is all this that we hear? Is your government turned upside down? Are your khans in rebellion? Are your people running mad? Why is your city invaded by soldiers and cannon? It must be false, that which is said, that all these preparations are made only to seize one man. Is it true that your shah does not know where to bestow his head? Are your viziers' understandings turning round and round? What means this great debt of yours? For Khoda's sake tell me all

you know. My shah will cut my head off, if in relating these things I show the least negligence.

The mehmandar having heard him out, instead of looking disconsolate at this melancholy picture of the state of his country, laughed outright, thereby disconcerting me not a little, who had put the match to this explosion of questions.

''Tis most true,' said the mehmandar, 'that these troops and these guns which have entered the town have been brought in consequence of the apprehension of some popular tumult, and of the possibility of that tumult breaking out upon the seizure of one man. But make yourself easy: this is not a rebellion such as you occasionally see in Persia, where a khan at the head of his tribe disowns the jurisdiction of your shah, and defies his power.'

'That may be true,' said the ambassador, stopping the mehmandar's narrative; 'but your debt—the money your government owes? tell me of that. If it be so in reality,

how will your shah be able to fulfil his engagements towards Persia?'

'Our debt!' said the mehmandar in astonishment: 'what of that?'

'Yes, sir,' said the ambassador, 'your debt. You acknowledge that you have one.'

'Certainly, who ever doubted it?' said he; 'we have a very large, and a very heavy debt.'

'Ah! there, you see,' said the Mirza, exultingly, 'we are not such dolts as you would take us for. Although we are Persians, and live beyond the mountains, yet the business of the world is known to us. We are not without thought, believe me, sir. Persians are not such asses.'

'All that may be very true,' said the mehmandar; 'but what has that to do with our debt?'

'It has thus much to do,' answered the Mirza, 'that we must come to some explanations. What may be the amount of your nation's debt?'

'Whatever explanations you require, you will receive. I am afraid,' said he, 'that you have not words in Persian sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the extent of the sum. Let me see; it will be about one hundred and twenty thousand crores of tomauns!'

'Allah! Allah!' was exclaimed by all of us at one breath. 'It cannot be,' said the ambassador; 'it is impossible: so great an absurdity cannot enter into the conception of man. After all, sir, we are Persians—we are not asses. Your statement is an assertion without meaning. It cannot be.'

'It is but too true,' said the mehmandar.

'Not all the treasure which Nadir Shah seized at Delhi, added to the riches of the Seffis, the wealth of the *Khonkhor*, increased with the immense accumulation of money and jewels of our present shah, not all these added together would amount to half this sum. England must conquer the

whole world, and seize upon its revenues, before she can collect money to pay off the whole of this debt.'

'But,' said the mehmandar, 'we do not wish it all to be paid off: we should look upon such an event as a national misfortune: were it so, we should be reduced to the necessity of burying our money underground, as you do in Persia, or living by the sweat of our brow in tilling the earth. The possession of money would be an inconvenience; we should have no one to take care of it for us, as we have now, and moreover, paying us a good sum for being allowed so to do.'

'These sort of schemes, to say the truth,' said the ambassador to me and Mohamed Beg, 'we do not understand. To be overloaded, and to rejoice in the burden, is what neither ass, mule, nor camel would do. You,' turning to the mehmandar, 'you, it seems, are an exception to this rule.' Then playing with the tip of his beard, in deep thought, he exclaimed again and again,

'*La illaha ilallah!* One hundred and twenty thousand crores of tomauns!'

The mehmandar was no sooner gone than we began to give vent to our astonishment and incredulity.

'That man,' said Mohamed Beg, 'is a liar; he must be a liar: who can believe his stories? Fath Ali Khan, our king of poets himself, could never have invented such lies, if he had even tried for them in his dream.'

'These Franks, 'tis true,' said I, 'differ totally from ourselves: but, after all, there are things credible, and things incredible. If a man were to tell me that he had seen a house as large as the mountain of Demawend, who would believe him? not even this lying mehmandar. One has heard of fifty crores, and even of a hundred crores, but whose imagination ever compassed the sum he mentions?'

'True, true, you say,' cried out the ambassador; 'we must not write this to be laid at the foot of the king of kings. We

have already acquired a sufficient reputation for being liars of the first class, that it should be increased by this giant lie. I dread lest the accounts which we have already transmitted be disbelieved, particularly those relating to the ships and guns possessed by the English. Let us hear how they are received first, before we venture upon descriptions requiring a more capacious faith. After all, our heads are of more consequence to us than the strength and wealth of this country, even if all that we hear be true!'

Upon this we parted; and I wrote what had passed in my journal.

CHAPTER XV.

The Persians are taken to see sights.—Of Woolwich and its artillery.—Of Hajji Baba's inconvenient friends.

THE ambassador at various times had been taken by the mehmandar to see many wonderful things. Occasionally he took one or two of his suite with him, but seldom did I accompany him. He had dined with the heir apparent to the throne of England; and the accounts which he gave of the magnificence he had witnessed on that occasion were equal to any thing related of the feasts of the great shah Abbas. Others of the king's sons also gave him entertainments; and scarcely a nobleman was there who had not invited him to his house. He was now persuaded to see some of the public establishments, and a day was fixed for visiting one of the great *topkhanehs*, or arsenals of the country.

When the day came, to my astonishment he ordered me to accompany him. On several occasions I had perceived that he wished to make me forget his past ill-treatment, and this was a favour which convinced me that my fortunes were again on the rise. I had almost forgotten my Hoggs in the events of the last few days; but now as the sun shone again upon me, I determined once more to pursue my object in cultivating their acquaintance.

We went to a place called Woolwich, and there were received by officers of consequence. There was nothing very remarkable in the buildings; but, by my beard! when we came to see the guns, existence fled from our heads! We saw cannons of all sizes and denominations, enough to have paved the way, if placed side by side, from Tehran to Tabriz; if placed lengthways, God only knows where they would have reached—into the very grave of the father of all the Russians perhaps!

'*Bah! bah! bah!*' exclaimed the am-

bassador; 'say after this that this nation is ruined! Why, here is enough to blow the debt, and the creditors to boot, thousands of parasangs beyond the farthest Jehanum! Go to, go to, my little uncle,' said he to me, 'let us talk no more of the ruin of England. The friendship of such a nation is not to be thrown away. If the Turcoman or Yuzbeg once knew that Fath Ali Shah was a friend to a king who possesses ten thousand cannon, and ten millions of cannon balls, whose dog would he be to think of disowning his supremacy?'

We were taken from one wonder to another, with our hands to our mouths, sucking the fingers of astonishment and admiration. Secrets were explained which before had been kept under the veil of ignorance. The making of a gun now appeared as easy to us as twisting a piece of sugar. We saw iron flowing about as liquid as the waters of a canal, and becoming a cannon, a ball, a bar, or a nail at pleasure.

I noted down what we saw, agreeing all the time with my chief, that in vain I wrote, in vain we might take oaths, we should find no one in Persia to believe us.

Among the officers who conducted the ambassador through the establishment was a young 'no beard,' who attached himself particularly to me, and who showed me all sorts of attentions. I was fearful lest this preference might be noticed by my chief, and therefore rather shunned him. The cause of his attentions was explained when the youth informed me that he was a young Hogg, son to the worthy family who had taken me into friendship. When we had shaken our elbows, I inquired after his parents, and to my dismay he told me that he expected their arrival every moment. To prevent their introduction to the ambassador now appeared impossible; and if the mother was to call me prince in his hearing, I foresaw that my former miseries might again be renewed, and that perhaps I should be disgraced in the very face of

the assembled company. What was to be done? Seeing that the ambassador was in an excellent flow of spirits, and particularly pleased at having discovered that our apprehensions concerning the distressed state of England must be false, I thought that the best mode of meeting the dilemma in which I stood was to make him a partaker of it; therefore I took the first opportunity of saying to him—

'If you wish to burn the fathers of those who call me prince, *bismillah!* in the name of Allah, now is the time,' pointing to the young officer, 'he is one of them.'

'What words are these, Hajji?' said he, kindly, 'whatever is gone is gone.'

'Sir,' said I, 'these people do not understand our manners. Whatever I may say, they will persevere in making me a personage, when you know as well as I that I am nobody but the son of Kerbelai Hassan, the Ispahan barber.'

'Go, go,' said he, 'say no more about it.'

By this time we had been conducted

into a handsome room, where we found refreshments spread on a table, and moreover a crowd of well-dressed ladies and khanums ready to receive us. Nothing is to be done in England, we had long ago remarked, without women and eating.

I was soon informed of the arrival of my friends, for the old lady, at the head of her daughters, approached me without ceremony, and at once asked me to introduce her to the ambassador. To this I thought it best to assent; and pointing them out to him, I said in Persian, 'These are my friends, the unclean animals. For the sake of your child, say something to them, and then my soul will be free.'

He very good-naturedly did as I requested, and said, in his own English, laughingly, and pointing to me—

'*Prince tell me, ma'am, you very good friend his. He one very good, very great prince, ma'am. He love all Hoggs, and you very much.*'

What was said in beard-laughing the

old lady took in good earnest, and bending her knees several times up and down, she seemed to have lost all power of speech, and could say nothing but, 'Yes, your excellency! ha, your excellency! hey, your excellency!' Most luckily for me, she seemed entirely to have forgotten me and my principality in her confusion.

She was brought a little to herself when the ambassador, having remarked the attractions of the blooming Bessy, said,

'*Prince very good taste, ma'am. Mashallah! all Persian man like good moon-face.*'

'Your excellency is very kind,' said the mother of my fair one: 'Bessy is better than handsome, she is good; and here is my Mary, too, she is an excellent girl, and fond of the poor!'

'*Penah be khoda!* refuge in God!' exclaimed the ambassador to me in Persian, 'let us be free of your unclean friends!' and turned upon his heel to speak to a very

beautiful virgin, who had been brought up to him by her mother.

This movement threw my friends upon my hands. They who now had heard me styled 'prince' by my chief, and who were indebted to me for an introduction to him, could not sufficiently testify their gratitude. I, too, flattered myself that I had performed a masterstroke of policy, in turning a situation of difficulty into one of advantage, and thus the sunshine of prosperity again beamed upon me.

I now made my advances to the object of my admiration with more confidence in myself. I presented her with an orange. I sighed once or twice quite loud, close to her ear. I rubbed the skirt of my cloak against the back of her pelisse. A few other indications of my passion I also continued to make from time to time, which I flattered myself would pass for love; but whether it would be taken for English love, that, to me, continued a point of un-

certainty, and I longed to get a lesson from some young practitioner. All I was doing might be set down for Persian manners, and if it were, my labour would be in vain. I became determined to thoroughly understand my business before I proceeded further; and therefore looked about me narrowly to see whether I could discover any exhibition of the tender passion among the company present. My young friend, brother to my charmer, was, I perceived, very closely seated near the beautiful damsel who had been introduced to our chief. I saw that the eyes had much to do in their intercourse. 'Ha, ha!' thought I, 'we understand eye-play perfectly; without that there would be no love in Persia.' Then helping on shawls, and picking up gloves, appeared to me another requisite. 'This is new to me,' said I, 'let me be mindful of that.' I caught the virgin blushing. 'Oh! could I but make my fair Bessy blush,' thought I, 'my

business would be complete!' I saw the youth blush too. 'I'll cut off my beard,' thought I, 'for let me blush like the sun, it would never shine through my black hair!' At that moment the ambassador, having seated himself at the table, two old ladies, the chief personages no doubt of the entertainment, were placed on either side of him, which he no sooner perceived than calling aloud to the beautiful houri in question, and at the same time waving his napkin, he asked her to come and sit next to him, to the utter discomposure of the old ladies, who seemed to think themselves very ill-used.

There was a general pause at this movement, and it was quite evident that the young folks, as well as the old ladies, were distressed by this summons.

'Very odd!' mumbled out one of the old khanums.

'Very ill-bred!' remarked the other.

'This is what they call throwing the

handkerchief, I suppose,' said an elderly officer to me with a nose as red as his coat, and hair as white as his trowsers.

'Throwing what, sir?' said I.

'Why, when one of your nation,' said he, 'admires a lady, he throws his handkerchief at her; is it not so?'

'That can't be,' said I to him as well as I could, 'because we seldom use a handkerchief; and when we do, it is to wipe our hands after eating. On a journey we wrap up our cold rice in it!'

The old soldier begged my pardon, seemed surprised at what I had told him, but thanked me for my information, which he immediately repeated to his neighbour; both of them after that held up their hands in surprise.

The ambassador, upon rising from table, released the young maiden from a situation which evidently had been very little to her satisfaction, although her mother seemed to be in the seventh heaven for the distinction which had been conferred on her

daughter. 'Let me be naked and unshorn; let me live on roots, and sleep on flints, so that I have but consideration,' saith the wild Dervish. It is the same among the English: distinction, consideration—these they seek above all other things. The Hoggs would have given their wealth for them. For them Mary would become a martyr, Bessy squeeze her foot into a Chinese shoe, Jessy be buried in a cell full of books, and the old mother be dragged through the dirt at the tail of a Duchess *Begum*.

I was full of these thoughts as we drove back to the great city; and excepting my being recognised for a prince, which perhaps might advance my suit with the old folks, I began to despair of being able to win the affections of the fair English maiden.

CHAPTER XVI.

Hajji Baba takes lessons in the art of love.—He puts them into practice, and meets with mortification.

'I WILL no longer live in a state of uncertainty,' thought I, as I rose from my bed on the next morning, and I repeated this resolution as I combed my beard before the looking-glass. 'Here are gray hairs coming on apace,' said I, glancing at several which obtruded themselves among the mass of black; 'and if I delay a day longer, there is no daughter of the infidel who would have me, even were I the first cousin of our blessed Prophet himself!' I determined forthwith to make my love known to the fair Bessy, and to propose lawful marriage to her. The original conversation which I had had with the mother at the playhouse was still fresh in my memory. Since then I had learned that each daughter was to be endowed with above a crore of

tomauns; and with that sum in my pocket, what dog was there in Persia who would dare call into question the respectability of my ancestors? Before I ventured upon this step, I determined to take a 'fall in Hafiz*.' 'Let me see,' said I, 'what my good guide will tell me.' In order to perform this act propitiously, I went through the proper ablutions, said my prayers, and then took the book in hand. I made the necessary invocations, and then with much apprehension opened it. My eyes fell upon the following words. 'Take the rose wherever you can find it, but scratch not your fingers in the attempt.'—'Thanks to Heaven,' said I, 'it will do. As for scratching my fingers, I have done nothing but scratch them all my life through; and the miseries which an infidel girl can inflict never can exceed what that semi-demon of *Sugarlips* made me suffer. *Bismillah!*' said I, and girded myself with my best shawl on the occasion. But still I felt that I was igno-

* A mode of divination resembling that of the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.

rant of the customs of the Franks, and that I ought not to take such a step without being better acquainted with them. Whether the proposal ought to be made by myself in person; or whether, as in my own country, I ought to send some old *gees sefid*, a gray-headed female elder, to do it for me; whether presents were usual on such occasions; and whether I ought to begin my negotiation by laying in a stock of sweetmeats: these were questions which required explanation. I did not like to speak to the mehmandar upon the subject, lest he might suspect me of an intention to run away with one of his countrywomen. I was at a loss of whom to inquire. At length it occurred to me that a hint was sufficient, and that I might as well gain my information from one in the lower ranks of life, as from the highest; since a ceremony so well known must be common to both. The head English servant, or *nazir*, in the ambassador's household was an old man, who not long since had married a young

wife; and as he was an object upon whom the other servants were wont to pass their jokes, I thought that I might in perfect safety get the necessary intelligence from him. He had shown himself my friend when I had received the shoe-heel on my mouth; and, indeed, whenever blows were inflicted, he always appeared offended, and said 'dam!' Of him I inquired how he had managed to get married, and what were the forms preserved among the Franks when the man asked the woman the one question. He went into a long history, part of which I understood, and part remained unintelligible; but the immediate object of my inquiry he made perfectly clear to me. It seems that he was escorting his love to the mosque on a rainy day; she held his arm, whilst an umbrella was spread over their united heads, her father and mother following behind. The rain fell in torrents, and they stopped under a portico for shelter; it was at that particular moment that he asked her to have him: he

could not have chosen a better; she accepted him. He agreed with me when I questioned him closely, that most likely had it not been for this particular circumstance, that is, the combination of rain, a portico, and an umbrella, he might not have succeeded; and that perhaps he might never have had courage again to do what he then had performed.

This was enough for me. Could I by any means, thought I, secure these accessories, I would not fail to take advantage of them. I inquired of Mohamed Beg how such objects stood in our estimation as things fortunate or unfortunate. We were agreed that they were all three eminently fortunate. A parasol was emblematical of royalty; no one since the days of Jemsheed, excepting kings or the sons of kings, could use one in Persia. Then a portico, either as an entrance to a palace or a mosque, was ever the emblem of grandeur and prosperity; and lastly, the rain, we had no difficulty in agreeing, was

the blessing above all others for which we prayed, and which was only another word for plenty and happiness. The circumstance of the old man and the old woman walking behind instead of before the nazir and his intended, I also contended was fortunate. Had they been crossing their path, or long in sight, matters might have gone otherwise; for no fact is so well attested, that the very appearance of an old woman brings ill luck, and that a glance from her eye is almost fatal.

During the whole of my attentions to the fair Bessy, I had carefully avoided hinting to Mohamed Beg what was the object which I had in view: his strict principles would never have countenanced the union of a son of the true faith to a daughter of the infidel, unless indeed she first renounced her religion; and even then he never perhaps would have allowed of the eligibility of such a union, except for convenience-sake, as *mûti*. He did not at all seem aware of the ulterior object of my

inquiries concerning the combinations necessary to a Frank courtship; and thus far I became fully confident that no one, excepting myself, possessed my secret.

Bearing in mind what I had heard from the English nazir, I determined at once to make a trial of my fortune, and to seek the house of my fair one. In stepping from my own home I put the proper leg foremost; I blew over each shoulder, and, moreover, I did not omit to take with me an umbrella which was standing in a corner of the hall.

Could I be blessed with the same propitious circumstances which had furthered the suit of the nazir, I made no doubt of my success; but, as one of our poets hath said, 'Love is made up of uncertainties; like the flowers of the field, which at one time are strengthened by the wind, at others torn to pieces by it, so is it strong and weak by times and seasons:' and so, thought I, it hath probably

acted upon the inclinations of the fair mistress of my heart.

Many had been my misgivings as I slowly walked onwards. I frequently thought how much more convenient was the intervention of an old *gees sefîd**, as practised in Persia on such occasions, than the being brought face to face before the decider of one's fortunes. At length I reached the house, and was about to knock three times, when of a sudden the door opened, and behold, the mamma Hogg stood before me, followed by her two daughters—the sainted Mary, and the object of my hopes—the comely Bessy. They uttered an exclamation of delight when they saw me:—this augured well. Had the old lady not been the first to hit me with her eyes, I should have been at my ease; but still, thought I, if I can but get her to walk behind, all may be well still.

* Literally, a gray head; an old woman.

They invited me to perform one of the daily English ceremonies, which consists in walking about without an object; for when I asked Mrs. Hogg whither she was going, and on what business, she answered, 'La, prince! nowhere, to be sure—we are going to take a walk.'

With my thoughts intent upon the nazir, I said, '*No church to-day, ma'am? you no walk there?*'

'No, prince,' said she, 'the churches are shut; they are only open on a Sunday.'

'*In Persia, ma'am,*' said I, '*mosques open always; people pray when like;*' and in saying this, according to the Frank custom, I offered my arm to the fair Bessy, who, without hesitation, took it, and we proceeded on our excursion; her mother and sister following. We made our way to the end of the great street in which they lived, and then, to my joy, I perceived an indication of rain. The ladies were for returning; but I persisted so strongly in standing under a range of pillars, which

formed the portico to a house, that they could not help siding with me. It rained, and the umbrella was spread over my head and that of my companion. My heart was leaping in my mouth, and I was about to follow the example of the nazir, when the mother, all at once, roared out, just as some people were passing, 'Prince! let us go, we shall catch our death of cold if we stand here much longer.'

This broke the speech which at that moment was hovering on my lips, and I remained suspended between heaven and earth. A movement to depart from the mother drove me and my charmer from our place of refuge, and as the rain appeared to increase, it was determined that the 'taking walk' ceremony should be abandoned for the present. We were retracing our steps as fast as possible, when the rain came on in torrents before we could reach the house, and we ran for shelter to a doorway, which stood most opportunely on our road. 'Here, then,' said I, 'I will seal

my fate;' and mentally saying my *bis-millah*, I softly whispered to my moon-face—

'*You are my* tooti sheker kha, *my sugar-loving parrot—I love you like one soul mine—you come wife with me, and marry me!*'

She drawled out, 'What!' with a strange emphasis upon the word. This having given me time to collect my thoughts, I explained, as well as I could in her language, what were my desires; but in vain I expected to hear the same answer which the nazir received from his mistress. It came not. On the contrary, she quietly withdrew her arm from mine, and saying something which I could not understand about speaking to her mamma, I stood before her, looking, no doubt, like an ass which had made a bite at a flower, but had bitten its tongue instead. '*Ne shoud!* It is not to be!' said I. I was sure that we had received a stroke of the ill-boding eye from the old mother, and without accepting of

her invitation to enter the house, I said my *khoda hafiz* in a hurry, and returned home with a thousand unhandsome words flowing from my wounded heart.

After all she is nothing but a woman,' said I; 'why should I be eating so much grief?'

CHAPTER XVII.

His scheme of fortune-hunting is divulged.—Others besides the Hajji are influenced by money.

Knowing but little of the manners and customs of Franks; fearful of confiding the situation in which I had placed myself to any one, and still unwilling to give up all hopes of so desirable a prize, I laid my head upon the pillow of thoughtfulness, and buried myself under the covering of resignation. After thinking more intensely than ever the learned *Abou Avicenna* did in consulting over a case of imminent danger, I came to the conclusion that patience taken in a bowl, and not in a cup, was now to be my remedy; and all I had to do was to wait for the conclusion of my adventure with the same

quiet that every good shiah waits for the twelfth Imam*.

But a day had scarcely passed over my head ere I received a summons to attend the ambassador. So rare an occurrence made me apprehensive that something serious was about to forthcome, and I was not deceived.

'How is it, man,' cried out my chief, as soon as he perceived me, 'that you cannot leave people alone, and that you must be going about the city, giving us Persians a bad name?'

'A bad name! In the name of *Khoda*, how is that?' said I.

'Yes, a bad name! You are not contented with making yourself a prince; but you must, forsooth, be marrying every

* The twelfth and last, surnamed Mehedi, whom the Persians pretend is still alive, and is to appear with the prophet Elias at the second coming of our Saviour.

daughter of the infidel who comes in your way. How is this?' said he.

'Strange and wonderful people are these, O Mirza!' said I. 'Who accuses me of a desire to marry? Who am I, to contemplate such an act? I have had enough of marriages, and wives, and brothers-in-law, as you well know, that I should try my fortunes again in that line.'

'Are you so much without shame, man,' said the ambassador, 'as to stand before me in this manner, with a lie at the beginning and end of all you say? My soul has been turned into bitterness during the last hour by the eternal story of one, who in dullness exceeds a setter to sleep, and who has been asking me so many questions concerning you and your fortunes, that, by the beard of our shah, I am more than dead.'

'By your soul, tell me,' said I, 'who was this person, and what did he ask?'

'He wanted to know,' answered he, 'who you were? Whether of good family,

and if, being a prince, the title was hereditary? and whereabouts might be your principality? and what were your revenues when you came to your fortune? He swore that you wanted to marry his daughter.'

'And what did you say?'

'What could I? Laughter came to my assistance, and I assured him that you were no prince; that you were the son of a barber, and that all your inheritance consisted of a pair of razors. What else could I say?'

'Who was he? for the love of Allah!' said I: 'was he old or young, fat or lean?'

'What do I know!' exclaimed the Mirza. 'He was an old man, all fat and blubber; one of ugly aspect; and although he was all this, he yet had the impudence to call himself by the name of the Author of all things: he called himself *Hâk**.'

I immediately understood that it was the father of Hoggs who had paid this visit,

* One of the many appellations of the Deity.

and who had been 'foxing*,' with an intent to discover how far I might be a proper match for his daughter. I stood like one impaled. I was angry with myself—angry with my ambassador, and I could have sold my friends to the Turcomans. That one who had seen so much of life should thus be taken in, was a reflection too bitter to bear; and the manner in which I was taunted by the ambassador completed to throw my heart upside down, and to turn my liver into water.

'Now, do tell me, Hajji,' said he, 'what ashes have fallen upon your head this morning? It is quite evident that this old infidel has made less than a dog of you, or why should the light of your countenance thus be darkened. Tell me, my soul, what has happened?'

'It is nothing, *wallah, billah!*' said I; 'it is a story not worth relating; whatever is gone, is gone.'

* An Eastern expression for spying.

'Speak, man, speak,' said the ambassador, between jest and earnest, 'what mischief have you been doing in this foreign country? we cannot handle men's beards after this manner. Either you have been enticing this old fellow and his daughter to walk round your finger, or you have not. The question lies between these two points. What have you been doing to him? Why do you lie, and call yourself prince?'

'I have already made my representation,' said I, 'that I never have called myself prince. These people will make a prince out of a collector of old rags, provided it serves their purposes. Only give them a scarecrow, with a beard and a shawl round its waist, and they will call it by titles with which we clothe our blessed Ali.'

The ambassador getting angry, then said, 'Will you give me an answer, or will you not? By the shah's beard, I swear that if you do not inform me what this story

means, I will force you to an explanation. You shall be tied with the camel tie, and thus sit in the darkest hole in this house till you tell me.'

'My story is simply as follows: this old man has a pretty daughter,' said I, 'and if you will allow me to speak the truth, love came over me, and I asked her to marry me. By Allah, I swear, by the fortunate salt of the king, by your death, and by our blessed Prophet, and the holy Imams, I swear, that this is the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.'

At this moment entered Mohamed Beg, to whom the ambassador immediately related the story, and now in addition to the jests and scoffs which I had already endured, here was I about to receive the admonition of the unrelenting master of the ceremonies. He immediately gave me the workings of his mind upon the occasion. 'You have done ill,' said he. 'The ambassador speaks the truth when he says that

we shall leave a bad name here. How much the more shall we not acquire it, in our own country, should we return infidels to our faith, dragging infidel women in our train?'

'But who knows,' said I, 'whether she would not change her faith? Love produces strange miracles; love is of all religions.'

'What words are you throwing in the air, O Hajji!' exclaimed the ambassador. 'Don't you know that these infidels are constantly in full thought how to make us converts to their faith; that one half of their population are now translating their sacred scriptures into our language, and the other half employed in printing them; and how can you say that any daughter of England would abandon her faith, to follow the beard of such a poor devil as you through the world! Do not make yourself out quite so much of an ass.'

'Then, after all,' said Mohamed Beg,

'even suppose she would change her faith for your sake, how could you ascertain the sincerity of her conversion?'

'Oh! as for that,' said I, 'there can be no difficulty. Let her dye the soles of her feet, her finger-nails, and the palms of her hands with *khenna;* let her tatoo her skin with the proper invocations, and pronounce the *fatteh* after me, she would be as good a Mahomedan as either you or I.'

'God forgive me!' exclaimed Mohamed Beg, and counted his beads.

'Go, go to!' exclaimed the ambassador. 'What demon has possessed you to set you marrying at this rate. Have you not had enough of Zenab and Shekerleb?'

'Believe me,' said Mohamed Beg, 'that if you persist in this scheme, the rest of your life will be passed in devouring grief. There are plenty of women in Persia.'

'Yes,' said I, 'but they have no money like these——'

'Money!' exclaimed the ambassador,

and the master of ceremonies, both in one breath. 'Has your affair* any money?'

'Yes,' said I, 'she has.'

'How much?' said they both.

'A crore of tomauns,' answered I, '*nagd*, in cash.'

'*Wallah, billah!*' exclaimed the ambassador, in a very altered tone. 'Where does she live? which is her number?'

'Do many of these daughters of the Franks possess money?' inquired Mohamed Beg, very significantly.

'The greater part of them are not without it. The people of this country take almost as much care of their daughters as they do of their sons,' said I.

'Money is a wonderful thing!' sighed Mohamed Beg, after a long silence.

'You old bankrupt,' said the ambassador to him, 'I spit upon your beard. An infidel becomes a true believer in your eyes, as soon as there is money in the case.'

* The words are *mál shuma*, your property.

'Let me represent for the good of your service,' said he, 'that we are enjoined, in almost every page of the blessed Koran, to despoil the infidel; ay, and even to slay him. What harm, then, could there be in robbing him of a daughter, provided she were the means of depriving him also of his wealth? We are only thereby executing the commands of the Holy Prophet, upon whose head be eternal blessings.'

'Allah! Allah! admirable mollah! excellent casuist!' roared the ambassador. 'I suppose we shall see you twisting your curls next, and painting your eyes, to catch an infidel's daughter!' Then turning to me, he said, 'Go, Hajji, go, make your mind easy; when the fat Frank comes here again, I will tell him that you in fact are somebody, and that you once were the child of an old dog of a vizier, who, thanks to Allah, is now burning, himself and all his ancestors, in Jehanum. Let me know, in the mean while, where these

crores of tomauns are to be found. In that, I will be your partner. We will go halves. You shall keep the daughter, and I will be satisfied with the tomauns.'

Upon saying this he dismissed us.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Unpleasant consequences of an ill-concerted scheme. —Hajji Baba becomes angry, and writes an English letter.

I HAD not long left the ambassador, when a young infidel was introduced into my room; in him I recognised the youth whom I had seen at Woolwich, a Hogg, and brother to the moon-faced Bessy. At the sight of him my heart received a jar. I had done no harm, 'tis true; but no one likes to see another who possesses the secret of one's want of success.

We shook elbows together, and made the 'How d'ye do?' and the fine weather. I asked him concerning the state of his family, to which he freely replied; and then, as well as I could understand, he told me that he had come, on the part of his father and mother, to speak to me upon the subject of his sister. He assured me

that they felt highly honoured by my attentions, and by my proposals to her.

I was delighted at this, pulled up my mustache at the intelligence, and explained to him, if such were the case, that all was easily settled, for I was ready to marry her at once.

He then began to talk about difference of religion, and hinted that if the marriage ever were to take place, I must submit to go through their ceremonies, and begin by turning Christian. This was more particularly insisted upon by his sister Mary.

I asked what those ceremonies might be; and as far as I could learn, they consisted, first, in having my name cried out in the church, somewhat in the same manner we cry a stolen horse in our streets; then of getting a written permission from certain *hakeems*, or doctors, without which nothing can be done; thirdly, of appearing in the church, with a ring in my hand, which being put on his sister's finger, nothing more was to be done but that we

should abscond for a full month after from the face of the world.

Upon hearing this I remained in a state of suspense. How could it ever be that I, a Mussulman, should make myself of less account than a dog? I objected to the ceremonies, and endeavoured to explain how much more simple it would be if we were to marry after our fashion. We did not go to the mosque. Our respective deputies or *vakeels* met, agreed upon the terms of our union, and it would depend upon her and her parents to be brought to me through the streets on a horse, with music preceding the procession, or, to make the thing more quiet, I agreed that she might come in a coach.

The young infidel did not seem to relish my proposal. He then informed me, that he was empowered to make some further explanations which related to dower. He said that his sister would receive a certain sum from her father on her marriage,

and begged to know what were my possessions, and what I could settle upon her, in case any thing were concluded.

I recollected all that had happened to me, upon a similar occasion, on my marriage with Sugarlips; but I felt that nothing of that sort of deceit would pass current here. I was long pausing what to say, being but little prepared for such a question. To say the truth, I had trusted too much to my being thought a prince; and wishing to gain time, I told my young friend, that although I longed to be married, yet that I must think a little upon this serious subject, and then I would let him know. He then urged me again to become a Christian. Since none of the torments necessary to make a Jew or Mussulman were inflicted, I did not see much objection to his request; but I required time to consider of it.

He was then rising to depart, when, as if he had forgotten something, he said, 'You know, prince, we are anxious to see our

sister happily settled in the world; and, as your country, your manners, and even you yourself, are quite new to us, you will forgive my parents for having acquired as much information as possible on these subjects. My father, in consequence, wrote a letter to the ambassador's mehmandar, requesting his advice and opinion. This is that gentleman's answer: it is right you should read it, and should you have any remark to make, pray do, and you may be certain that we shall give it our most serious attention.' Upon this he gave me a letter, and then in good friendship we parted.

'What news is this?' said I. 'These people are as much awake as we ourselves. If I have got into the hands of this stubborn truth-speaking mehmandar, it is evident that I am extinguished. Let us see what he says.'

Upon this I endeavoured to decipher and understand his letter, but finding how

difficult it was so to do, I copied it, word for word and stroke for stroke, in my journal. It was after this manner:—

'*To Alexander Hogg, Esq.*

'SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the reception of your letter, in which you inquire of me, first, Whether I am acquainted with the prince, Mirza Hajji Baba? second, Whether I can inform you what may be the extent of his possessions? and third, Whether, from my knowledge of Persia, I would encourage any one of my countrywomen to marry a native of that country?

'With respect to your first and second inquiries, I must inform you, that the person you allude to is no prince, but the son of a barber at Ispahan; and as to his possessions, I should doubt whether he possesses any thing beyond the clothes on his back.

'In answer to your third question, I can only say, that I would rather tie a millstone

about my sister's neck, and throw her into the sea, than marry her to a Persian. I may be wrong, but according to my views, it would be devoting her to certain misery. Once immured in the *anderún*, she would associate with creatures, 'tis true, in the shape of women, but whose habits would constantly shock her notions of decency and propriety. And it is not to be denied that she would frequently be witness of all the wicked passions of our nature—anger, strife, jealousy, revenge, and not unfrequently of more horrid crimes. The same varieties of character and disposition, the same mixture of good and evil, 'tis true, are to be found in Persia as in all other countries, but few, indeed, are those who can withstand the force of example, and whose good disposition will not be exposed to corruption by the principles of a religion so baleful as the Mahomedan, and by the exactions of a government so degrading as despotism? As for the Hajji himself, he is by nature well disposed, and,

had he received the education of a Christian, would doubtless have been a good man; but he has the vices common to a country where men live much by their wits, and, as it were, from hand to mouth. It is this which makes them liars and rogues in spite of themselves; for, as a matter of course, a man esteems it but common justice to inflict upon others the injustice which he himself has experienced.

'Let me now hope that, after this sincere opinion, you will no longer think that you have provided for the happiness of Miss Hogg, by making her the Princess Hajji Baba.—I am, &c.'

Having transcribed this letter, I called my friend the nazir, to give me the fullest interpretation of it; and when I thought that I had well understood it, I felt a crookedness of temper, which would, no doubt, have broken out in great violence against the author, had he been present. In my secret thoughts, however, I could not but

allow that he was right: but why should he spoil my fortunes, we who had slept in the same room together, and dipped our hands in the same dish? I felt myself disgraced in the eyes of the Hoggs; and I immediately determined to give an answer which would drive existence out of the mehmandar's head, and make him less than a Christian's swine. I therefore wrote, in my best manner, as follows:

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—'*Pon my honour, mehmandar one bad man. What for he want to throw Miss Bessy in sea, sir? What for he write lies, sir? He say I barber's son. I once was barber's son, but now I 'come mirza. Why he tell lies? He say I poor man, and wear old clothes. Why he say that? My shah very rich,* Mashallah! *and if shah rich, all his servants rich too. What he want more, sir? I very angry.*

'*Then he say other great lies, sir. He*

say Persian women bad. Where he see Persian women, sir? He not known one, sir. Then how say whether she be good or bad? In all countries some good, some bad. He say all Persian man bad, all woman bad. That little lie, sir, not good. Love to wife, daughters, and all friends.

'HAJJI BABA.'

Having despatched this letter to the father Hogg, I felt more at my ease; but I determined to let the ambassador know, that if we had acquired a bad name in this foreign country, it was not through our faults, but through the words of that ill-conditioned infidel, the mehmandar. Evidently our chief was now becoming very impatient at the slow mode of transacting business among the Franks, for the object of his mission had not yet been fulfilled, and as the mehmandar came every day with a new story and a fresh excuse, each of which proved to be one as false as

the other, it would not be difficult to prove the baseness of his character. Why then should I not scrape my heart clean, and expose its scouring and the conduct of this infidel at one and the same time?

CHAPTER XIX.

The heir apparent to the British throne visits the ambassador.—Strange things come to pass.

I WAS determined to speak openly to the ambassador upon the subject of the mehmandar, and had proceeded to the hall of audience to do so, when I found them both in deep conversation. The moment was not yet come, for in England, as well as Persia, there are times and seasons for all things. The ambassador was now full of a *ziafet*, or an entertainment which he had resolved to give, to which he had it in contemplation to invite the heir to the British crown, as well as all the nobility, the courtiers, and the chief priests. Much management and negotiation were requisite before this event could be brought about, and one of the great difficulties was to fix upon a proper day. This we thought

extraordinary, because the mehmandar had taught us to believe all days were alike in the eyes of his countrymen; that one was not more fortunate than another. His lies became hourly more palpable. At length a day having been fixed when a gathering of infidels might be made, the printing-houses were set to work to announce it.

When this event was known throughout the town, the sensation was as great as when Fath Ali Shah celebrates the festival of the *No Rouz*. It seemed as if the English had never before seen Persians. The ambassador's door was thronged from morning to night by persons seeking to be invited. One expected an invitation because his cousin had been in Persia, and had seen the shah. Another because he was friend to the brother of a man who had spoken to the ambassador on his landing at Plymouth. A lady was angry at not being asked, because she insisted that, since Persians admitted of a plurality of

wives in their harems, the representative of Persia ought to act upon the same principle in the formation of his party.

I had heard no more from my Hoggs; and evidently the representations of the mehmandar had produced their effect. The subject was only now and then alluded to in joke by the ambassador, who asked me when we should touch the gold; otherwise I had almost forgotten it. But what was my surprise, a few mornings before the fête day, to discover, in a carriage full of infidels, the head of the mamma Hogg making signs to me! 'By the beard of Ali, these Franks are mad,' said I; then again, being struck by a hope that something propitious to my love might have taken place, I deemed it right to obey the old woman's invitation, and stepped to the door of her carriage.

To my amazement she spoke to me as if nothing had taken place between us: she said, 'Ah, prince! how do you do? It is a long time since we have seen you.

You forget your old friends. We are not good enough for you now. I see how it is.' And thus she continued for a long while, until my head went round and round in endeavouring to ascertain what her meaning might be; when at length, just as she had ordered her coachman to drive away, I discerned the *mutlub*, that is, the real object of her visit. It put me in mind of our Persian letters, the principal part of which consists of compliments, whilst the true meaning is thrown into the margin. Her object was to be invited to the ambassador's fête; and to insure this, the faithless Bessy was made to shake the tip of her finger with mine. I was not so easily to be taken in as to accede without difficulty to her request; but at the same time secretly hoping that the crore of tomauns might still be forthcoming, I made one of our usual Persian speeches, in which I assured her that the dust of her threshold was collyrium for my eyes, and entreated her never to di-

minish the quantity of her shadow. With these speeches she appeared satisfied; but from that moment I was visited with a succession of notes which were sent to me at intervals almost as regular as the crying of the muezzin from the mosque, and which all breathed a desire to see my promises realized. Not wishing to revive the ambassador's jokes, I did not like to apply to him; but a thought struck me. I remarked how the invitations were written out, and taking possession of a printed card unknown to any one, having carefully looked out my words in a dictionary, I wrote upon it, '*One mother Hogg and two head of daughters;*' using the word *ras**, let me own it, not without some small tincture of maliciousness. I then delivered it myself at their door.

I was surprised at the meanness of the preparations which the English make in

* '*Ras*,' or head, is seldom applied to others besides slaves.

expectation of a visit from their prince. Had we been left to follow the customs of our country on this occasion, we should have taught them what devotion to a royal personage means. A *pahendaz*, consisting of costly stuffs, would have been spread from the entrance of the street to the very room in which he was to be seated, and a hundred gold tomauns would have been presented to him at the threshold. But here, no other distinction save a *peishwaz*, or deputation, to receive him at the door of the house with lighted candles, was prepared for his reception. Weeks perhaps would have been taken up in Persia to prepare food for his attendants: whereas here every thing remained in its place until the very day.

The ambassador held a consultation with me and his servants upon how we could best show him honour. Taki, the ferash, said we ought to kneel and kiss the ground as he passed; to this Mohamed Beg dissented, for he asserted that no Mussulman

ought so to humble himself before an infidel unless he were forced. Seid and Mahboob, the black slaves, recommended that the Circassian should sing, and play on the tambourine, as she would have done before our shah, or his son, had either of them visited her master. To this the ambassador himself objected, for he feared lest his wife should hear of it, and then Heaven knows what the result might be to him. We proposed entertaining the prince of England with some of our national feats. Hassan, the cook, was a capital eater of fire and spouter of water. Mohamed Beg undertook to recite ten thousand verses from the Shah Nameh. Taki could perform several feats of tumbling and *lúti bazi;* he could also twirl a brass plate on a stick balanced on his nose. If wrestling were required, the master of the horse and the barber were ready to come forwards; and should a long story have been necessary to fill up the evening, I, who had occasionally been called upon to en-

tertain our late grand vizier, was prepared with any parts of Antar that might be required. But all these arrangements were overruled by the mehmandar, who said that, as the prince did not understand Persian, the recitations of the Shah Nameh and the long story would be of no use; and, instead of the other feats, he proposed collecting a body of English singers, men and women, who would perform after a manner agreeable to him.

The hour of the meeting at length came. The ambassador had ornamented the picture of our shah with a magnificent frame. Innumerable lights produced a blaze throughout the house, and a seat was prepared for the prince. The company began to arrive, whilst we stood in the hall to see them pass. I and Mohamed Beg, who had been to an assembly, were not surprised at the beauty of the young women, the great number of the old, their dresses, and their rich

ornaments; but the rest of the suite, who saw this sight for the first time, stood mute with astonishment. 'Oh!' said the master of the horse, 'half a dozen of these moon-faced damsels carried off in a *chappow**, and brought to the market at Tehran, would fetch gold enough to set me up as a khan for life.' 'Look at that old woman, dressed as fine as the peacock of paradise!' exclaimed Taki, the carpet-spreader, seeing one with skin like Russia leather; her arms and breast uncovered, and her whole person groaning under years, gold, and diamonds: 'give her to me as she stands,' said he, 'and I will say my *khoda hafiz*, or 'God be with you,' and take my departure to-morrow.' The string of odd figures, men and women, was endless. At length, hearing a well-known voice calling out 'Come along, Bessy, come along, Jessy,' I espied three women tottering under immense head-

* A predatory excursion.

dresses, something like those worn by our *Sheikh el Islams*. These were the mamma Hogg and her daughters; who, as soon as she remarked me, roared out, 'Well, prince, here we are; see, we have put on turbans, all out of compliment to his excellency the *shaw*, that 's what he is called, I believe!'

Upon this they ascended into the great room. I did not like to follow until some time had elapsed, fearful of an explanation; at length, when I did venture, to my horror I saw the mamma exhibiting the card I had written to the mehmandar, and evidently asking him to take her up to the ambassador. She and her daughters seemed to attract the observation of all the assembly. My heart went up and down with apprehension, and I was dreading the taunts or the reproof of both ambassador and mehmandar, when the sound of many voices was heard roaring out the arrival of the prince of England. The ambassador and mehmandar, with great de-

monstrations of respect, went forward to receive him; and as he entered the room all the English formed themselves into a circle, and made low and profound bows. It was now that I ascertained the truth of what I had frequently heard concerning this royal personage. Every word he uttered was a charm; his smile was like the virtue of a talisman, and a look from his eye must be sure to secure good fortune. I sighed as I recollected what a different sensation was created at the appearance of our own princes, who kept all the world at a distance, whose look inspired fear, whose smile preceded extortion, and whose frown was followed by punishment! As the prince walked slowly round the circle, talking with the greatest affability to the nobles and the courtiers, I perceived Mrs. Hogg and her daughters holding a conspicuous post in the ring, having secured a place by much pushing and elbow-play. When the prince approached them, his eye being caught by their immense tur-

bans, he smiled, and asked the ambassador who they were: she, the mamma, was all this time making much play with her knees. The ambassador, not recollecting them, inquired of the mehmandar, who seemed rather puzzled what explanation to make, when the mother again produced the accursed card, from which, by desire of the prince, the mehmandar read aloud, 'One mother Hogg and two head of daughters.' This produced a laugh which nothing could suppress, although, in watching the face of the prince, it was clear that his good-breeding gave no encouragement to it. In the meanwhile the women slunk from the public gaze in great mortification, whilst I too made my retreat.

Having devoured my misery in the best manner I was able, I kept out of the way of observation; but still I had a desire to make another trial to secure the good graces of my charmer; and searching for her and her mother, I at length discovered

them in the room where the eating and drinking were displayed. They seemed in no manner disposed to throw their shadows over me. The mother was making up for her mortification by eating whatever came in her way, whilst the daughters would, no doubt, have willingly hid themselves and their turbans in the lowermost depths. I received no marks of gratitude for having procured them the notice of their prince; and if I built my hopes of attaining the maid and her money on this account, it was evident I had made a false reckoning.

I now returned to my companions, who were in high discussion at all they saw. We were agreed that the fêtes given in our country exceeded what we saw here: for, instead of the space and air which we enjoy, the assembly were gasping for breath in the confinement of rooms closed in on every side. From long residence I had now become accustomed to the pro-

miscuous congregation of men and women; but those of the suite who had not seen a Frank entertainment could not recover their astonishment. The manner in which all ranks of both sexes were pressed together seemed to them only a preparative for something else. The order and quiet of the whole scene was still more astonishing.

'Allah, Allah!' cried the master of the horse. 'Pack a room full of Irânies in the same manner, and see the noise that would ensue! The knife would long ago have been in full use, and not a beard would have remained unplucked by this time.'

There was an unusual stir and noise at the departure of the prince, and then very soon after the whole house was cleared. What we looked upon as a mob not to be dispersed very gradually disentangled itself, and without one single accident, quarrel, or act of theft, did this assembly

of infidels return in peace to their homes. 'Tis true one great source of quarrel which we possess in Persia did not exist here: no pipe-trimmers or shoe-bearers were collected, consequently there was no precedence among the servants to be contended for. But, on the other hand, the fights going on in the street among the charioteers and drivers of *arabahs*, were as great as might be seen between the *hyderis* and the *neamet allahis* in our own towns*. 'Ah!' said Mohamed Beg, as he remarked

* These are two sects in Persia, of which the origin is not well ascertained. Most of the low rabble of the Persian cities take either one or the other side of the question, although ignorant of the real cause of quarrel, and sometimes they fight with sticks and stones until many heads are broken and even lives lost. The most approved reason for this is that which Chardin gives, namely, that Ispahan (where the sects first arose), is situated on the site of two rival villages of the name of Hyder and Neamet Allahi, and in the course of time they were included in the extent of the city.

the fury with which some of these men without mercy beat their horses, 'Ah! the tyranny which is exercised upon the unfortunate *rayats*, or peasants, in Persia falls upon the horses here!' And upon this we went to bed.

CHAPTER XX.

The Persians talk over the preceding evening's adventures.—Of the persons and things they saw and heard.

The next morning, after the ambassador had bathed, his beard being newly dyed and trimmed, his spirits were up, and he spoke to us for a long while upon what had taken place the night before.

'Now,' said he, 'you have seen what the Franks are. You could not have known them before, and it is only by seeing them frequently after this manner that I myself begin to be acquainted with their customs. They are people without pride, without noise, and friendly to strangers. Did you see their prince? He is the Abbas Mirza of this country. By the holy prophet, by Allah! I swear that I never conceived that any man could ac-

quire so much power over another as he has over me. I thought Abbas Mirza had made me sufficiently his slave, but here I am bound hand and foot. Such manners—such a power of countenance, with an eye in its full moon*—so condescending, and still so royal—I am sure that Fath Ali Shah would not only accede to all the reasonable propositions which England makes to us, but would even place his throne at this prince's disposal.'

'Yes, in truth,' said Mohamed Beg, 'he is a wonderful Frank. He is, among the English, what the beard of the Asylum of the Universe is among the beards of his subjects—without an equal.'

'But then you did not hear his conversation,' continued the ambassador. 'He said things which made me faint with laughter. He has a turn of wit which quite comes up to some of our jokes. If

* This means a quick and penetrating eye.

the shah had not selected me as his ambassador, all other Persians would have been thought asses! Suppose that Turk, Asker Khan, or that cow, Ferajullah Khan, or that madman, Mirza Abul Cossim, had been sent, what dog is there amongst them who could have conversed with this prince as I have done?'

I, who feared to eat abuse for having invited the Hoggs, immediately exclaimed, 'Yes! yes! Mashallah! who is there possessing an understanding such as yours! Thanks over and above be to Allah! the shah's face in this country, without your wisdom, would have been black, and we should have remained despised and less than curs.'

'You ought to have heard some of my jokes,' said he, 'excited by my flattery. I made the prince laugh with what I said to an old *begum*, who came up making fine speeches, whose lip and chin were covered with almost as much hair

as my own, and who evidently had forgotten to chew her *mastich**. I said it was impossible that she could carry her kindness and civility farther, since she had let her beard and whiskers grow out of compliment to the occasion.'

We all exclaimed, '*Barikallah!*'

'On another occasion,' said he, 'when I had been introduced to an unfortunate shah who had taken refuge at the English court, and who was so fat that he was obliged to be always seated, I said to the bystanders, *Mashallah!* How happy the poor will be when he is restored to his kingdom! Although none of them understood the delicacy of my observation, still they all said, Yes! yes! and the king himself appeared mightily pleased.'

'Excellent, excellent!' said we; 'you spoke admirably. We understand your joke: wonderful wit. *Mashallah! Mashallah*†!'

* *Mastich* is a kind of gum which sweetens the breath.

† This alludes to the custom called *teil mizan*,

'Again,' said he, 'an old khan accosted me, and asked many questions—How did I like England? What did I think of the women, and of the horses, and of many other things? I was at last tired of him, and said, '*All things very good, sir; but one thing little bad—old man ask too many questions.*' This made the bystanders laugh so that they almost died of it, whilst he, the khan, was annihilated.'

'Yes, and in truth,' said Mohamed Beg, 'they do ask many strange questions. There was a youth who inquired whether we were famous now for being good horsemen. We laughed in his face, and told him that none could excel those of Irân. An Irâni, on his horse, with a spear in his hand, was a match for a host—he was a male lion. He then asked if we were

when, on particular occasions of thanksgiving, eastern princes weigh themselves with money in the opposite scale, which they afterwards distribute to the poor.

taught to draw the bow. We told him that in the days of Jemsheed we fought with bows and arrows, as do the *Turcomans** of the present time; but that now no nation could manage the gun with our skill. At length, he asked whether we were famous for speaking the truth. We then saw that he had, in fact, all this time been laughing at our beards, and making game of us. I informed him if that was the way he took to call us liars, he need not have given himself so much trouble; and that, by the blessing of Allah! if we did lie, it was no business of his.

'He saw that I was angry, and then endeavoured to turn off his impertinence by assuring us, that he had read in an old book that our education consisted of learning to ride, drawing the bow, and telling the truth; and he wanted to know if such was the custom still.'

* The Persians assert that the etymology of Turcoman is from 'bow and arrow;' *i. e. tîr*, arrow, and *comān*, bow.

'There was another person,' said Taki the ferash, 'who came amongst us, and who made the most extraordinary inquiries. Through an interpreter, who spoke a little bad Persian, he asked us what sort of heads we had. We thought, at first, this was a Frank compliment, as we might say, how is your brain? but it was more than that—for he persisted in wishing to know whether our heads were hard or soft, and he even persuaded me to let him feel my head, which he did by pressing it about with his hand. When he found that it was in fact soft, he appeared to be thrown into the greatest state of ecstasy, and returned to us again with one or two more, who all felt our heads in turn*. We became surprised at this new ceremony; the more so because we had never seen it practised among themselves. All we could discover was that one of their old books

* The Hajji no doubt must have fallen in with some one who had been reading Herodotus.

recorded that we had soft heads, and they were delighted to discover that it spoke the truth. We remained greatly surprised.'

'Another of them,' said the master of the horse, 'endeavoured to turn our horses into ridicule, but I gave him more in exchange than he brought. He asked me, 'In the name of the Prophet, why do you paint your white horses' tails red?' 'And you,' said I, 'why do you turn your long tails into short ones?''

'A young *kasheng*, or beau, asked me,' said Mahboob, the black slave, 'where the Circassian was, and whether she was among the infidel khanums? I asked him, 'why do you ask?' He said that he wanted to see her; and that by the laws of his country she ought not to be kept in confinement. I told him to go and tell the ambassador so, when he put his finger in his mouth, and went away.'

'These people, with respect to the Cir-

cassian,' continued Seid, the other slave, 'make a great many odd observations.'

'How?' said the ambassador.

'They say that neither I nor Mahboob are men; and moreover, that there is a certain conjuror, as well as we could understand, who was able to take her out of confinement at any moment, do all we could, merely by writing a talisman, which in this country is called 'Habeas Corpus.' They also say, that any body who chooses may make her his wife, by taking her into the mountains to a country called 'Gretna Green,' where a dervish lives, who is a worker of iron, and evidently a composer of charms, for he can turn men and women into husbands and wives with the same ease as our blessed Prophet could turn sheep into camels.'

'What do you say, you man?' said the ambassador, in a tone of derision. 'Whatever these Franks choose to tell you, you believe! If they were to tell you that the

sun was made of *halwa**, you would believe it. What have they to do with the Circassian? She sits in a corner, *fakir!* poor thing! and has nothing to say to any body.'

'For the love of Ali,' inquired Mohamed Beg, 'who was that man dressed in black, with a sort of fine sheepskin on his head, sprinkled with white dust, and a little curtain before his thighs? He was a strange personage.'

'He was one of the chiefs of their law, a great *mollah*,' said the ambassador. 'The great rolls of muslin which our sheikh el Islams wear round their heads, he wears upon his arms; but his dress here was *tebtil*, in disguise. It is only on occasions of ceremony that he puts on his muslin sleeves. He asked me whether we spoke Hebrew in Persia. I told him we despised Jews, and that their language was impure; but that we learned Arabic; at

* A common sweetmeat in Persia and Turkey.

which he appeared pleased, but still he persisted in asserting the necessity of Hebrew. We conversed for some time upon the excellence of our respective languages, when I completely asserted the superiority of ours, by assuring him that it required thirty camels to carry one dictionary. After that he could say nothing. He is a learned man, and spoke many languages.'

'But the women! the women! O my master,' exclaimed the master of the horse. 'Had it not been for the old ones, this would have been the *behesht*, the paradise! In this world I never saw any thing like them. For the sake of the Prophet, do present one or two of them to the shah! take them, in order that we may not be called liars on our return. The king of England surely, for the love he bears his brother, would not object to a few of his subjects being carried off.'

'Are you mad?' answered his chief. 'Little do you know of the English, and

of English kings. If an Englishman's dog were to be taken from him by force, for the king's use, he is capable of making those rebels, the opposition, take up arms in his favour, and drive the king's viziers into the deserts. After that, talk of taking away any of his subjects without their consent!'

'By the by,' said the ambassador, turning himself towards me, 'speaking of women, who were those walking about with things on their heads as large as the cupolas of our mosques? They were the property of Hajji Baba, I would lay a good wager. By my soul! explain: is it not so?'

'What can I say?' said I. 'After having embittered my life, they have finished by making me eat dirt.'

'If these are the same uncleans whom you presented before to me,' said the ambassador, 'once was enough in all conscience. However, if they have money,

there is no harm done; and you will not forget our partnership.'

I rejoiced to have escaped better than I had expected; but still I felt the mehmandar lying heavy on my heart, and I hoped ere long to let him know how little we were pleased with him.

CHAPTER XXI.

The ambassador becomes anxious to return to Persia.—He visits a new personage, and of the consequences of that event.

We had now been in England eight months, and, to say the truth, we began to think seriously of our own country. The ambassador complained bitterly that the business about which he had been sent to the English shah remained unsettled; and I never lost an opportunity of insinuating that no faith could be put in the word of the mehmandar, and that *he* must be to blame for the delay. The ambassador at length, whose mind became every day more the prey of anxiety, broke out into bitter words, and thus addressed the mehmandar.

'After all, sir, our shah is somebody. Irân is a country. We are men. We have money; we have houses; we have produce

of the soil; but it is plain that we are here looked upon as your servants. You don't know the Persians, sir. Who amongst them will believe me when I say, that the country I am living in is one, which, if it chose to exert its energies, would swallow up all others. They will turn up their noses at me, put their caps on one side, and in their ignorance will exclaim, '*Goor peder shahi Frank.* The grave of the father of the Franks be defiled.' In the name of Allah, sir, get me an answer to the requests of my shah, and let me go. We are dead with this delay.'

The mehmandar answered after his usual manner. He begged the ambassador to consider that the business between states was not like that between individuals. That besides the embassy from Persia, England had embassies from many other kings and governments, all of whom had important negotiations to transact; and that if he would but have a little more patience, he would no doubt be dismissed with

honour, and, he hoped, much to the satisfaction of both countries.

The ambassador then urged what he had urged a thousand times before, namely, that his shah was a despotic shah; that he sometimes had a bad custom of cutting off men's heads; and that if he, the ambassador, could not give a good account of this delay, his own would in all probability be disposed of in that manner. 'By Allah, let me entreat you,' added he: 'go to your vizier, swear to him that I am dying of grief; tell him the smoke of this town kills me; if I die, my blood will be upon his head.'

The mehmandar swore that all would go well; and then recommended that he should pass his time in seeing many things which he had hitherto neglected. This was his old excuse, and we knew it well.

'What things? What sights?' said our chief. 'By dint of seeing things, of running here, running there, you have killed me. The other day you took me to a place, where you assured me that the

whole business of the state was transacted, and where I saw a collection of semi-madmen. But, in the name of the Prophet, who ever transacted business after that manner? If you call that a sight, we might as well call the shah's *defter khaneh* a sight, where the grand vizier sits of a morning, surrounded by hundreds of mirzas, mollahs, khans, ketkhodas, peasants, and couriers from all nations; answering one, dictating to another, writing himself, giving abuse to a fourth, and ordering the bastinado to a fifth. That is indeed doing business; but to be taken into a large room where a parcel of individuals are collected, some on the right, others on the left of a man with a powdered sheepskin on his head, all occupied in their own concerns; whilst some one of them is holding forth unheeded, and if heeded, perhaps laughed at; and to call that seeing business transacted, it is really laughing at one's beard. After all, we are Persians, and are not without our rules and regulations. We know the world.'

'We were unfortunate on that day,' said the mehmandar; 'none of our good orators happened to speak, 'tis true, and you could not have received a good impression of our house of parliament. There was only one of the opposition expending his breath.'

'Opposition!' exclaimed I. 'Why those are the rebels: is it not so?'

'Rebels?' said the mehmandar: 'what words are these? A man may differ from another in opinion, without being a rebel.'

'We don't understand it so in Persia,' said I. 'The shah would have but a miserable reign of it, if he supposed that any man in his dominions could ever have a different opinion from his own. I have been thinking,' said I to the ambassador, 'that you would do a service to this country if you would recommend to the king of England to treat this opposition tribe in the same manner as Shah Abbas did the Armenians: some he transplanted to Mazanderan; others he sent to the New Julfa;

and others again to different parts of Persia, and thus broke their influence as a body!'

'You do not say ill, Hajji,' said my chief, much pleased with my suggestion, whilst the mehmandar held his tongue in peace, like a man who could say much but would not. He then reminded the ambassador that this was the day when he was engaged to dine at the country-house of a rich *sharoff*, a money-changer, where he would see the manners and customs of that class of the king of England's subjects.'

'Let us go,' said the mirza, apparently in despair, 'let us go! By dint of seeing and being seen, my liver has turned into water; my soul has withered!' He then ordered me and Mohamed Beg to accompany him, and by the evening we reached a house surrounded by trees, distant about three parasangs from the city.

It was a beautiful place, which would inevitably have belonged to one of our princes, had it been in Persia, whoever

might be its owner. There were trees in abundance, running water, and flowers of all hues. The whole was better arranged than any thing we had ever seen, even in the royal gardens at Tehran; and whatever could contribute to the enjoyment of man was here displayed.

The ambassador was received at the door by a fat, business-like looking man, and in the hall of audience by a lady and daughters, surrounded by a large company of men and women. There was a something in their appearance which did not look quite like the infidels with whom we commonly lived; and Mohamed Beg, whose instinct at the approach of any thing unclean is extremely acute, was the first to observe, that perhaps they might be Jews.

'Jews!' said I, 'it cannot be. The mehmandar would never so much degrade us Mussulmans, much less the representative of our shah, by taking him among Jews.'

Upon closer observation, we began to be

convinced that they could be nothing else, and at a favourable opportunity we hinted as much to the ambassador. He seemed evidently embarrassed at our observation, and did not deny the truth of it; but as some of his own Christian friends were among the party, he kept amongst them, and put the best face he could upon what to a Mussulman must always be a degradation.

'So they have Jews in this country,' said I to Mohamed Beg, 'as well as in Persia! but see what Jews! they are princes: see the bankrupts! what state, what magnificence! Oh! if we had them in Persia, by the beard of Ali, I myself would be the first to spit in their faces, and take from them all that came in my way!'

'The mehmandar did wrong,' said my companion, in an angry mood, 'to bring us here. We will burn his father!'

'We will,' said I, 'we will,' too happy to have a good reason for being revenged upon him; and as we were thus taken up,

we were accosted by one, who caused Mohamed Beg to say his *astaferallah*, and to close his skirts. 'See,' said he to me, 'one of the unclean tribe is here. For the sake of Imam Hussein, let us treat him as if we were in Persia.'

'Let us hear what he says first,' said I, when a slouching, thick-skinned Jew, with large saucer-eyes and heavy eye-lids, approached us, and asked us if we had brought any precious stones from Persia, or pearls, perhaps.

'*No*,' said I in English—'*No—we no bring—you want steal, perhaps?*'

Upon this he laughed, and took my words in joke. He then inquired whether perchance we had any foreign gold to change, and followed us so close, that Mohamed Beg, I verily believe, would have struck him a box on the ear, had I not prevented him.

'*Go, sir*,' said I, '*we no Jews—we Mussulmans;*' upon this he went away, but soon returned, followed by another, who

by his appearance was not a Jew. This man began by remarking, that it was a fine day, and asked us whether we had such gardens and such houses in our country.

I answered, that if we had such houses and such gardens, they would not belong to Jews as they did here, and *that* was one advantage which we had over England.

'Then perhaps you don't love Jews?' said he.

'*No, sir*,' said I. '*Christians are bad, Turks are bad, and dogs are bad—but Jews are worse than all. You, sir, are you Jew?*'

'No, sir,' answered he, 'I am not a Jew,—I am a grocer.'

'*A grocer!*' said I: '*What religion may that be?*'

'Oh!' said he, laughing, 'it is no religion, it is a trade: we deal in sugar and coffee, pepper and mustard, and groceries.'

I then discovered that he was in fact a *baqal**. '*Mashallah!*' said I to Mohamed

* A chandler.

Beg, 'the mehmandar has thrown us into pretty company!' Then turning to our new friend, I asked him if he was very rich, to which he assented with considerable self-importance, and added, 'We say in England, as rich as a Jew, but I do not see why we should not say as a grocer also.'

I made him understand, that he ought to look upon himself as very fortunate to be an Englishman, for if he were in Persia, the shah would soon make his riches of service to the public. 'He would oblige you to build a caravanserai,' said I, 'as Shah Abbas did his rich citizens, and if that would not be enough, he would force you to found a college, build a mosque, and endow a body of priests.'

'Ah!' said the grocer, 'we pay taxes and duties enough here, without coming to these extremities.'

By this time the entertainment was ready, and an immense company sat down to a most magnificent table, covered with a succession of dishes, so varied and so numerous,

that no Turkish cook could ever have exceeded them. The ambassador was seated between a Jew and a Jewess. Mohamed Beg and I could scarcely suppress our rage at seeing this. What would our shah say, said we, if he saw his representative thus situated? Is it not a shame that he permits himself to be in such a neighbourhood? He has forgotten that he is a Mussulman; he is become less than a dog! The disgust of Mohamed Beg increased as we sat at table, and all his Mussulman principles were developed. 'This is the acmé of degradation,' said he. 'Every precept of the Koran is here set at open defiance. With a Jew on either side—infidels before him—infidels behind him—with wine in his hand, and no doubt portions of the unclean animal under his nose—he is making the *khosh guzaroon* *, without shame or repugnance! He only wants to have his beard shaved, and to wear a hat, and he would be complete.'

* A free liver, a jolly fellow.

We returned to the city, evidently but little pleased with our excursion. The ambassador did not utter a word in the carriage. What we ventured to say only expressed our feelings of abhorrence against Jews, and we did not fail to talk so pointedly at the mehmandar, that we were not without hopes that he felt acutely how well we had burnt his father.

'There are some persons who think themselves wiser than *Asaf**,' said Mohamed Beg, 'but who in fact are the grandfathers of stupidity†.'

'Yes,' said I, 'Soliman (upon whom be blessings), had he had such men for his viziers, would never have acquired the reputation of being the wisest of all created beings.'

The mehmandar did not, however, cease

* *Asaf* is the name of the grand vizier to Soliman, according to eastern history. Among Mussulmans he is looked upon as a model of perfection.

† Asses.

extolling the beauty of the house, the excellence of the dinner, the civility of the host and hostess; and in answer to our attacks upon all Jews, the most he could urge in their favour was, 'that they were God's creatures like ourselves, and therefore objects of his mercy.'

CHAPTER XXII.

An English holy man visits the ambassador.—Of the presents he brings, and of the mischief which ensues.

MOHAMED BEG passed all the following morning in purifying himself from the contamination which he might have received from the Jews. He bathed, he recited a double quantity of prayers, and even left off his silk trowsers for a day. I did not sufficiently partake of his scruples to do the same, but I was not sorry to have an opportunity to give vent to my feelings towards the ambassador, who, although occasionally seized with fits of condescension towards me, generally treated me with slight, since the death of the grand vizier.

We related our adventures among the Jews to the rest of the suite, and taking advantage of the insuperable contempt with which that unclean generation are

looked down upon by us, we succeeded in rousing their disgust, as well as keeping up our own.

It so happened, that the day after the Jew day, the ambassador received a formal visit from an English mollah, arrayed in the full dress of his order, bearing in both his hands two Christian holy books,—one a book of prayer, the other the *Evangîl*, the Bible.

He was announced with a solemn face by the mehmandar, whilst we were standing before our chief, and introduced with many bows on the part of the priest. The mehmandar entreated the ambassador to receive him standing, which he willingly did; when the mollah taking from his robes a roll of parchment, highly ornamented and beautifully written, read from it an address, with an audible voice, and an impressive manner, and then placed in the ambassador's own hands the books of which he was the bearer.

The mehmandar then interpreted the

mollah's speech, which was an address from a collection of men who met together for the purposes of making converts to the Christian faith. It stated, that having the glory of God in view, and looking upon his ordinances as the best offering they could make to so illustrious a stranger as the ambassador, they had ventured to present him a copy of their holy scriptures, together with their book of prayer; and that they in consequence had sent their mirza, or secretary, to make them acceptable.

Mirza Firouz, in truth, behaved with great civility on this occasion, and dismissed the mollah with many flattering speeches; but the moment the ceremony was over, and when we had quitted the apartment, Mohamed Beg was the first to cry out that the ambassador had turned *Isauvi*, or Christian. He asserted that nothing could be more clear, for the shameless mehmandar had taken full possession of him, and had entirely kept us at a distance. He had thrown him, said he, almost exclu-

sively into the hands of his own countrymen, and having ensured his degradation, by making him keep company with the lowest of mankind, Jews and grocers, it was plain that what had just taken place was the finishing stroke. In short, he had made him a Frank and a Christian.

The representations of the master of ceremonies produced a great effect upon those of his countrymen who heard him, for they began to fear lest they also should be obliged to change their faith. Seid and Mahboob, the slaves, appeared very thoughtful; and it is supposed that they immediately related the whole circumstance to the Circassian, who had become so strict an observer of the rules of our religion that she passed the whole of her time in performing her ablutions, and saying her *namaz*. She took great fright at this change in her lord's principles; and as she was a courageous girl, it was not long before she taxed him with being an infidel to the purity of Islam.

To those who have witnessed the gathering of a storm upon the mountains of Albors, perhaps the fury which exploded in the ambassador's breast may be imagined. We heard its first violence in the Circassian's room, and then watched it gradually descending the staircases, until it broke out with increased violence in my apartment, in which we were assembled.

'Who presumes to say that I am turned Frank?' roared the ambassador; 'who amongst you,' cried he, raising his voice louder and louder, 'says that I am a *bideen*, a man without religion; who eats the abomination of the Christians, and no longer takes pleasure in Islam? Mohamed Beg, you are one; Hajji Baba, you are another,' turning alternately to us. 'What have I done, that you should say this of me? Speak, men.'

Mohamed Beg answered, with great deference, 'I am less than a dog; still the truth is, that I did not like to see the representative of our shah associating with

Jews. What can I say more? I have said it.'

'And who are you, you old long-bearded ass, who dare have an opinion concerning any thing which I may do? Am I to ask you where I am to go, and what I am to say? The shah permitted you to accompany me, to walk before me with a long stick, to say a few unmeaning words, and to make a few useless bows, and not to trouble yourself with my conduct; for that I will account to him who sent me—not to your dog's face.'

'We are Mussulmans,' said the master of ceremonies; 'and whatever is contrary to our religion, upon that every child of Islam may be allowed to remark. Although I am nothing, yet religion after all is something; and, as Hajji Baba knows, no inducement shall make me forsake it, to herd with infidels.'

'And you too, Hajji Baba,' said the ambassador to me, 'you all of a sudden have turned a man of God; you, who all your life

have been a sinner, a devourer of other men's goods; who were disowned by your own countrymen for turning Turk, and then kicked out by the Turks for being a swindler, say, why am I treated thus?'

'By your beard, O Mirza!' said I, 'I have done nothing. Mohamed Beg, who in truth is a Mussulman, was shocked at being made to associate with Jews; and this day, when you were visited by the Frank *mushtehed**, and accepted the holy scriptures of the unbelievers into your own hands, as you would have done our blessed Koran, he assured us that you were converted to their faith.'

'Oh you dog without a saint!' said he to Mohamed Beg; 'are you a Mussulman to lie after this manner? why am I to bear all this want of respect? I am the shah's representative, and if the shah himself was here he would cut your head off;

* A high priest.

but as I am a good man I will only punish you with a few blows. Give him the shoe,' he cried out to several of us; and having named me as the principal agent, I was obliged to take off my slipper, and inflict on the mouth of my friend as many blows as I could. I went to work as quietly as possible; but with all my ingenuity I could not avoid knocking out a certain old and solitary tooth, which had stood sentry at the door of his mouth ever since the last reign.

The poor sufferer left the ambassador in pain and anger. I heard him vow eternal vengeance; and to me he said, 'Oh you of little fortune! why would you hit my tooth! You did better things when you were a ferash, and beat men's toes.'

I swore upon the sacred book that I was without help, that I was ordered to strike; and I only begged that if he were ever obliged to do the same to me that he would not spare me.

I then tried to comfort him, which was

not a difficult matter, since, yielding as he always did to the decrees of predestination, his mind was soon soothed into acquiescence, and even into thankfulness for what had befallen him. 'Out of the dirty manure cometh rich fruits and cucumbers; so out of evil cometh good,' said he. 'I may now lay my head on my pillow in security, with the certainty that my boy is alive. I cannot now dream that I have lost my favourite tooth, since it no longer exists. But as for our master (may his liver turn into water!), you will soon hear that his child is no more; for three nights ago he told me that he had dreamed of the loss of a tooth.'

Having put a hot fig to my companion's jaw, and bound his face round with a handkerchief, we settled our tempers by smoking a kaliân, and by the evening we were almost ready for another scene. We formed plans for returning to our own country; and although there were many things in England which we should frequently regret, yet on

the whole we were agreed that a country of unbelievers was not the place for children of the true faith to pitch their tents in.

'In truth, however,' said Mohamed Beg, 'beer is a right good thing. See,' said he, 'what rare inventions these infidels have, even such as we ourselves must prize. This beverage, which is neither wine nor water, is lawful to the lips of a true believer. If our blessed Prophet could turn the milk which is promised us in paradise into beer, what a blessing he would have conferred upon us!'

'Then allow,' said I, 'that the women here are rare jewels. How much better, is it not, that they should mix with the men?'

'Upon that I am not so certain,' said my companion. 'My wife is becoming old now, and *Inshallah!* please the holy Prophet, I intend to get a young one on my return to Persia. Now, if we were restricted to one, as these infidels are, I must go on through life with the old one.'

'Ah, it is better,' said I, 'to have an

old and steady wife than a young and wild one. Mutual habits fit into each other in the same manner as a skull-cap, by long wear, becomes part of the head; but one might as well attempt to mix oil with vinegar as to make a young woman satisfied with the infirmities of old age for her portion, or the old man easy under the whims of the young girl.'

'Ah!' said Mohamed Beg, 'many things are good in this land, 'tis true, but there are also many bad. Nothing can ever make up for the loss of the sun. We see a sun here, which looks more like one of our lanterns than the glowing ball of light with which the climate of Islam is blessed; and as for their moon, we must put our trust in Allah!'

We were determined, as we wound up the conference, to do our utmost to return to our own country as soon as possible, and we were agreed that the sooner we could dry up the ambassador's soul the better it would be for us.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A scene takes place in one of the great London thoroughfares.—Of the event which is brought on in consequence.

It was evident that some evil star was glancing obliquely at us; for, in addition to the miseries just recorded, which were accompanied by much discord in the ambassador's household, another circumstance occurred which increased his ill-humour, and prepared the way for our being sent back to our own country.

Mirza Firouz was passing the evening by himself, bemoaning his hard fate at the difficulties of carrying his business through with the English viziers, and making plans for returning to Persia, when the mehmandar entered the room with his face turned upside down.

'What has happened?' said the ambas-

sador; 'are there news from Irân? Is the shah dead?'

'Nothing of great consequence,' answered he; 'there has only been a tumult in the streets.'

'*Il hem dillillah!* thank Heaven!' exclaimed the Mirza; 'I was afraid that that face of yours foreboded some disaster.'

'Something has happened, 'tis true,' continued the other, 'and it partly concerns you.'

This roused our chief, and he immediately asked a thousand questions in a breath, which the mehmandar heard out, and then said,

'The truth is, that what has happened might have become very serious; as it is, nothing is likely to forthcome. A person just now called upon me, in great haste and alarm, stating, that as he was walking through one of our streets called Piccadilly, he saw a crowd near a piece of water in the Green Park, and upon endeavouring to discover the reason of it, he

saw several Persians, whom he heard were persons of the ambassador's suite. On going nearer, he observed one of them standing naked in the water, whilst another, a black man, was taking care of the bather's clothes. The English mob, it seems, were indignant at this act of indecency, performed in the very face of one of their greatest thoroughfares, and had begun to show their disgust in no very agreeable manner to the strangers: they were pelting the one in the water, and hustling the other. This attack roused the anger of the Persians; and the black, who was amazingly fierce, drew his dagger. Things were looking ill,' said the mehmandar, 'when my informant left the crowd to seek me out; for the English had secured the parties, dagger and all, and were leading them off, he knew not where. That is all: now send for your servants, and let us see what account they give of themselves.'

This narrative roused the ambassador's

fury, and by the time the mehmandar had finished, every hair in his beard stood by itself, and the colour of his countenance had assumed a new hue. 'Ah! you administrator to others' pleasures! you unsainted cur, Seid, that is you!' said he. 'I'll make your liver descend; I'll dry up the current of your soul!' Then seeing me, he told me to call the culprits, as well as the rest of the servants, in order that they might hear his words.

Seid, the black slave, a young, well-shaped, animated fellow, appeared, nothing abashed, with part of his clothes torn and well dirtied, as if he had been rolling in the road; beside him stood his friend Taki, the carpet-spreader, a broad-shouldered, well-bearded, hairy young man, who looked as if he had put on his clothes in a hurricane, having lost part of them, and the other part not being quite adjusted; behind stood the rest of the servants.

'How is this, dog's sons?' roared out the ambassador. 'What has happened?

what have you been doing? Am I every day to find that our faces are becoming blacker and blacker in this foreign land? By this beard of mine,' touching the tip of it at the same time, 'I swear that if you have done wrong, I will take you to the next gutter, and cut your head off, in the face of these Franks and of the whole world, in order to show them that we know what justice means. How was it? speak!'

'What do I know?' said Seid. 'Taki, carpet-spreader; Feridoon, barber; and I, were going on our road, when we saw some water. The weather was very hot, as hot as at Ispahan. Taki said he had not bathed since we left Turkey, and as the water looked inviting, he proposed that we should go in. I saw no harm in his proposal, and he went in first. 'Tis true that he had no *loongeh*, bath-wrapper; but we said, what do the infidels know of *loongehs*? so he stripped, and went into the water. He had no sooner plunged than the mob

came round: they abused us; they stoned us; they called us Jews; they rolled me on the ground. I thought they would have killed us; and they were taking us away by force to the butcheries, as we believed, when a Frank gentleman interfered, and set us free; but I have lost my knife, and Taki his sash. That is all, and I have said it.'

'Then,' said the ambassador to the carpet-spreader, 'Taki, by my head, is that all? you, who ought to be a full-done man, do I hear this of you? Will there never be an end of the family of asses in the world? You have exchanged your beard for that of a cow*.'

To which Taki answered, 'If bathing be a crime, we are in fault; but water is God's gift, and is every man's property. We only know our own laws and customs.

* A man is said to have a cow's beard when he has done any thing unworthy of his own; perhaps on account of its rugged and scanty appearance.

Let the Franks teach us theirs, and we will agree to them.'

'See,' said the ambassador, ironically, 'the carpet-spreader is turned philosopher. *Mashallah!* Locman could not have spoken better:' and then turning to Seid, he said, 'And what became of the barber?'

'He ran away as soon as he saw the stones flying, and he is not come home yet.'

'He did right,' said the ambassador; 'bravely done, barber! Why did not you do the same? and why did you draw your knife, you with a burnt father?'

'A knife is useless unless it be drawn on the occasion,' replied Seid; 'I drew it in self-defence.'

'What shall we do?' said the ambassador to the mehmandar; 'it is plain that these fellows are without judgment; they think that all the world is Persia; they look upon English water as they would upon the water of their own soil; they can make no distinction between one coun-

try and another, no more than they can between one man and another; in short, their wit is small; their disposition to be asses great. If you think that they require punishment, speak. Should you insist upon having their ears, they shall be served up to you this moment. Perchance your government might take delight in the possession of their heads; let them say so, and the deed is done. Sir, we are lovers of justice. We do not stop short in our work; we go all lengths.'

Upon this the mehmandar made a long speech upon his view of justice, and entreated that no more might be said on the subject, only requiring that we might be reminded that England was not Persia.

I could not help taking this opportunity of saying, 'Sir, you boast of the freedom of your country. How do you account for what has just happened, when two poor lads, dying with heat, are stoned and almost put to death, because, in bathing, they take advantage of one of the com-

monest of God's gifts to man? We do not act thus in the East.'

He was rather shaken by this question, and my triumph was enjoyed by every one present. Without waiting to hear more, he soon after left us; and then, indeed, we gave vent to our feelings, ambassador as well as servants, at all we saw, and at all we underwent, in this land of infidels.

'Oh! I am dead, I am dying!' said our chief, stretching out his arms in a yawn; 'every day some new disaster befalls me. May I defile the grave of *El-chigiree* *! Unlucky was the day that I left my own country, to come all this way to get my face blackened! And you too,' addressing us all in a body, 'you make life bitter to me. The infidels love me; they say that, in truth, in seeing me they see a man. If I was left to myself to sit in my corner, there would be no harm in their country; but *you* will not let me

* The profession of diplomacy.

enjoy quiet. The long and short of it is, that we must return to Irân. The time is come. After all, Persia is the country for us. We there see the sun daily; we have our plains all to ourselves; we enjoy the security of our harems, and, saving the shah's condescension, we care nothing for the condescension of any one else.'

'Yes, yes, O master!' said we all, 'let us return—let us return.'

'If these burnt fathers, these viziers of the king of England, will but give me answers to the letters which I brought, and finish the negotiation which I have been ordered to establish, I will go with you,' said the ambassador. 'If not, you, O Hajji! will take charge of the principal part of the suite, and proceed with them. I will remain satisfied with my two slaves, and return *chappari*, that is, as a courier.'

This was the 'first breath *' of Persia that

* This is a pure Persian idiom; as the French might say, *le premier soupçon*.

had come to us in good earnest from our chief, and immediately we felt new sensations. My protector, the grand vizier, was no more, 'tis true; but I had the king's condescension in expectancy; I was the possessor of a tongue which, excepting the ambassador's, I might say was unequalled; and, above all, I had hope of all sorts in abundance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The ambassador shows some true Persian feeling concerning women, exemplified in the Circassian.—Preparations for departure.

THE ambassador's scheme of separating himself from the principal part of his servants remained undecided, because he did not know how to dispose of the Circassian. She was a woman, and the only woman of the kind, as far as we could learn, who had ever been brought to England. He felt that he would gain an ill name if he allowed her to go about the world without the protection of her master. Perhaps he did not place sufficient confidence in me to confide her to my care; and to deprive himself of the services of his own slaves, Seid and Mahboob, who were her constant guardians, was more than he could submit to. Therefore he

became without help, and his head went round and round with uncertainty. He had had no reason hitherto to be dissatisfied with her conduct. She had, in fact, proved herself to be the model of a Mahomedan woman; and if the infidels of English would but shake off their prejudices, she would convince them how strongly the obligations of our religion can act upon our conduct. She had never stirred from the house, and scarcely ever from the room in which she was placed on her first arrival. She eat with her fingers, and washed her hands with scrupulous precision. She always said her prayers at the stated time; and made and mended the ambassador's clothes, as a good slave ought.

But a circumstance most opportunely occurred, which, whilst it tended to increase the many miseries of which our chief complained, at the same time helped him to make up his mind concerning the expediency of her departure.

In England the houses of cities are situ-

ated in such a manner that no Mahomedan could ever secure the apartments of his women from the gaze of men, without considerable difficulty and inconvenience. Excepting houses which have *maidans* (squares) before them, all are overlooked; and as they are generally built upon the same model, the harem spy knows immediately in what direction to look, if he wishes to catch a glimpse of the women. To screen their wives, the English husbands are satisfied with placing a piece of slight muslin before their windows, whilst walls cannot be too thick or too high for the Persian. It so happened that the windows of the room in which the Circassian was confined were enfiladed by those of a long row of houses standing at an angle with the ambassador's; and when first we arrived, numerous were the heads of the infidels who were seen prying. Could we have seized even one, we would have shown him what it is to disturb the

privacy of our harem*! He never would have walked a step again without the recollection of his rashness!

One night the ambassador returned from an English assembly earlier than usual, and it was evident that he was over and above angry. He had scarcely left his carriage and entered the house, than with a loud voice he called for his black slaves.

'Where is Seid? Where is Mahboob?' was echoed throughout the house. They came breathless, although they were between awake and asleep, and the scene which ensued was as follows:

Amb.—Where were you, ye ill-begotten varlets?

Slaves.—Sleeping.

* When a man is found trespassing in another's harem, he is punished on the spot by being impaled with a tent-peg, which is made of wood, a foot and a half long, and cut into a spike at one end. This was told me by a person who had himself inflicted the punishment.

Amb.—Where is Dilferîb?

Mah.—She sleeps.

Amb.—*Gorumsak!* Rascal! What is this that I hear? Why did you tickle her to-day?

Slaves.—Tickle? We have not tickled her.

Amb.—By my beard—do you see it? (holding it out to them)—I swear that if you lie, I will impale you both. The infidels never tell lies; and one of them informed me, not a few minutes ago, that you were seen at the window this morning, one on one side, and the other on the other, tickling the Circassian. Is this true or not? Speak, before I cut your tongues out.

The slaves then looked at each other, when Mahboob said,

'I beg to represent that we did tickle her, and that's the truth of it; but then it was for the good of your service.'

Amb.—How?

Mah.—She was very low in spirits. She

had been crying. She was tired of her room and of her life. All we could say would not pacify her; so we took her to the window and tickled her.

Amb.—You madmen! who ever heard of such proceedings? Have I not told you a thousand times that she was never to go to the window; that she was never to be seen by an infidel? Why do you not hear my words?

Seid.—There was no harm in what we did. No infidel was to be seen, and the air did her good.

Amb.—If the air did her good, what was the use of the tickling?

Seid.—She wanted shaking; she wanted exercise.

Amb.—I shall die if I remain longer in your hands. What with Mohamed Beg's impertinence, Seid and Taki's bathing in the face of Franks, and the Circassian's tickling, my soul is embittered. She shall return with the rest of you to Persia. I

shall then be free. Go, go,' he added, and dismissed the culprits, as well as the whole household, for the night.

The following morning the subject of our departure was again discussed, and since the Circassian was now disposed of, there was no longer any reason for delay. We accordingly began to make our preparations, and one universal stir of bustle and cheerfulness ran through the house. The saddles and bridles were brought out and tied up in their wrappers. Our carbines, which had long remained in a corner neglected, were cleaned and made ready for use. Every thing among us now began to wear a character of Persia.

The shah having in part defrayed the expenses of the English embassies upon their arrival in his dominions, so had the English government defrayed a part of the expense of our embassy; but still many debts were to be paid by the ambassador himself, and these he was determined to ascertain previous to our departure.

Allah! Allah! when it was known in the city that we were about to depart, the rush of men and women, with pieces of paper in their hand, was quite astonishing. Each bit had its value, and this the ambassador was called upon to pay. 'Tis true that to this moment he had not much disturbed the contents of several sacks of tomauns, which he had brought with him; but when he had cast up into one sum the amount which he was called upon to discharge, he began to shake his head, and went into a corner to think. Had we been in Persia, the difficulty would soon have been settled; for had we not had the money, or perchance the inclination to pay, it were easy to put off the creditor, either by a promise of payment in corn, oil, or tobacco, or, in an extreme case of prompt payment, by a bastinadoing on the feet; but here it was different, for when we came to argue with the holders of these bits of paper upon the exorbitancy of their demands, and to propose modifica-

tions, they immediately threatened an appeal to mollahs and judges.

One demand we found so unjust, that we immediately applied to the mehmandar for an explanation and protection from it. This was from a painter, who had painted the white horse which the ambassador had presented to the king of England, on the day of the public audience. After having charged for the paint, the oil, the brushes, and many other things, he inserted a heavy sum for 'bodily fear.'

'What news is this?' said the ambassador to the mehmandar. 'This is being worse than Turks, who, on their passage through their own country, charge the poor peasants 'tooth money,' for the trouble of eating the fowls, fruits, and other provisions which they take from them by force. By this account, when a dentist draws my tooth, I may be allowed to deduct a sum for 'bodily fear' from the fee which he has the right to claim.'

The mehmandar made an inquiry into

this extraordinary charge, and from the painter's explanation found, that in undertaking the horse, he had set to work as if he were to paint a house; 'but then,' said he, 'a house does not kick at me as this beast did; and it was by the mercy of God that my brains were not strewn to the winds of heaven. Surely that circumstance must be taken into consideration.'

Strange as this appeared to us, still we were obliged to acquiesce in the demand; and indeed we found that an infidel armed with his bill was quite as formidable as a true believer amongst us armed with an imperial firman; both are absolute.

CHAPTER XXV.

Feridoon the barber's scrape.—An English rahdar, *or turnpikeman, makes exactions.*

In addition to the attacks made upon us with bills, the moment of departure seemed to be the signal for a general rising of misfortune. The same evil star which had presided at our leaving Smyrna, appeared determined not to leave us in England.

In the middle of a general turmoil, where the ambassador in person, at the head of his servants, was engaged in discomfiting a trunkmaker, who had asked him for the making a pair of *yakdoons*, or camel trunks, as much money as would almost build a house in Persia, appeared an old and ill-conditioned infidel, accompanied by a woman of bad aspect, and sour of visage, headed by a spokesman dressed in dirty black clothes. It

turned out, that their object was to make a complaint to the ambassador against Feridoon, the barber, for not having kept his promise to marry the woman who stood before us.

Feridoon was a remarkably intelligent youth, whose eyes were never shut, and who was always employed in doing something: for, not like the rest of his companions, he was scarcely ever seen counting his beads for want of work. He had learnt the English language faster than we had; he could make more *chum wa hum* in it than any of us, and had succeeded in obtaining the most presents from the natives. The old infidel, the complainant, was a manufacturer of soap; he had invented a new kind of soap, and upon the arrival of the embassy in England, it came into his head, in order to give it celebrity, to ask the ambassador to tell a lie for him, and to say that he was the soap's father. The ambassador thinking that this might be a Frank mode of making compliments, saw

no harm in the proposal, and ordered Feridoon, since the article in question was in his department, to go and tell the proper lies, affirming that the ancestors of all the children of Persia used this soap.

Feridoon, who could make play under a beard as well as any body, soon became friends with the soap-maker. He succeeded first in securing the possession of much soap; then, as his new friend was acquainted with many of the English barbers, he also acquired their friendship; and the collection of razors, straps, scissors, and knives which he made was prodigious. Feridoon in return taught them how to dye hair according to our fashion, an art in which they acknowledged that we excelled, and also gave lessons in the *dustmal, i. e.* the shampooing and joint-cracking. They would have persuaded him to set up for himself, and exhibit his art, so well were they pleased with his ingenuity; and had he not feared the ambas-

sador, he probably would; for by the description he gave them of our baths, they were persuaded that without them no country could prosper. But what could a solitary true believer under his circumstances do? He therefore fell in love, at least so the soap-boiler said, and his daughter was the victim.

Such were the circumstances of the case as we first learnt them; but the little man in dirty black said things of the conduct of our countryman, which quite astonished us, and he wound up his complaint, by roundly affirming, that, on account of Feridoon's promises of marriage, the soap-boiler's daughter had lost her character, her hopes of being ever married, and that his addresses had driven away a whole array of prosperous barbers, who were ready to carry her off by force, if she would not cede to entreaty. For all this he asked more than two thousand tomauns.

'By my beard!' cried the ambassador, when he heard this demand, 'this is worse

than all! These infidels are greater extortioners than any thing we can show in our own country.' Then addressing himself to Feridoon, he said, 'You dog-fathered shaver! what is this I hear? Who told you to go through the city making promises?'

'What promises? what marriage?' said the astonished Feridoon. ''Tis true that I one day asked this woman, who looks, as you may perceive, like one of our oldest *mutiehs*, whether she would be my wife for two months, and which I need not remind you, O master! is a custom commonly adopted by strangers in Irân; but little did I conceive, that for this I should be condemned to pay two thousand tomauns. I made no promise, *Wallah, billah;* I only asked her to marry as *mutiehs* marry, and see what has happened.'

Upon this, all three began to talk at once. The uproar became great, and we probably should have adopted a Persian mode of treatment, by turning up their

heels, when luckily the mehmandar came to our assistance. When the extortioners saw one of their own countrymen thus step forward to take our part, they were struck dumb, and the little man in black began to throw his face into smiles, and to 'look at the weather*.' The mehmandar sent them away with as little difficulty as a great man disposes of an inferior in Persia; and having done that, informed the ambassador that the imposture was too palpable to be upheld for a moment. The man in black, who was a mischief-seeking mollah, whom the Franks call 'attorney,' when he heard the scrape he would be likely to get into, if he persisted in this attack, how the shah would insist upon the bastinado being administered to him, he thought it best to go his way.

'But,' said the ambassador, 'in the name of Khoda, is there no justice in your country? Is every rascal who happens to

* Or, as we might say, 'to see which way the wind blew.'

have an old and disgusting daughter to dispose of, to exact money from innocent strangers, as if he were one of the royal executioners?'

'A breach of promise of marriage is a serious thing in our country,' said the mehmandar. 'Our law protects women, whatever yours may do.'

'A woman must be courageous indeed, in a Mahomedan country, to force a man by law to marry her,' said Mohamed Beg, who was standing by. 'Once within the walls of the harem, her husband becomes her sole lord and master, and then she eats blows, and devours grief, as a matter of course, for ever after.'

When we had got rid of this misery, we returned to the charge against the trunk-maker, who would not desist one black coin from his original demand. He was seconded by an array of infidel tailors, shoemakers, makers of shirts, and petty trades-folks, all of whom seemed to look upon what was written upon their scraps of paper as truths not to be contested, as

fixed and unalterable as the decrees of the blessed Koran.

At length, with the help of the mehmandar, who, by certain explanations which he made concerning the nature of shahs and their representatives, appeared to soften their violence, and to give a new reading to the doctrines laid down in their bits of paper, they received their dues quietly, and went away without more disturbance. But there was one still left who remained inexorable, and he had been the torment of our existence almost since our arrival. He was a stout unblushing infidel of the lowest class, with a red face, bulbous, and ready to burst, dressed in a coat, shaggy like a Georgian *yapâncheh**, and an apron tied round his waist, divided into two compartments. The demand he made was not to be understood. He said that he had a gate situated on the high road, near which he took post from morning to night, and that ever since

* A cloak peculiar to the Caucasian tribes.

our arrival, the ambassador's horses had gone through it daily without paying one black coin.

We endeavoured to ascertain whether he was a servant of the English shah, obstinate as he was in his demand, for perchance, said we, he may be a *rahdar*; a public levier of dues.

He said that he did not belong to the king; but talked of another authority, called 'trustees,' which he seemed to rate higher than a king, for he constantly was saying 'trustees ordered this,' and 'trustees order that.'

At length, the ambassador in despair roared out, 'We know no king, but George shah; we have never heard of your trustees shah; so, for the love of Allah, go your way. The roads are open to all ambassadors; this is one of the oldest received rules amongst nations. Their persons are sacred,—their path is not to be impeded.'

Still the man talked of his 'trustees,' who could be no considerable personage, since

he was his *haznadar*, or treasurer; for he assured us, that if we did not pay him, the money must go out of his own pocket.

The ambassador having ascertained from the master of the horse, that in fact this gate was situated between the house and the stables, and that the Persian grooms had always dashed through without paying, was apprehensive that something might forthcome to embroil the two courts. He said, 'We shall have a war of *Basūs** upon our shoulders, if we do not mind;' and after many consultations he determined to submit it to the mehmandar, who at

* *Basūs* is the name of an Arabian woman, from whom originated a war so called, which has since become an Eastern proverb, to express great events from small causes. Two of the Arabian tribes, it is recorded, fought for above forty years, because a camel, belonging to this woman, broke a hen's egg: the owner of the egg wounded the camel with an arrow,—an arrow pierced him in return, and the tribes were instantly in arms.

once cleared up the difficulty, by explaining that this man was not a *rahdar*, but one who kept the road in travelling order, and he immediately took it upon himself to satisfy his demands.

By this lucky interference, we were at length disengaged from all our difficulties, and nothing more was left to us, but to begin our journey, and to put our trust in God.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Hajji Baba pays his visit of leave to the Hoggs.—He attends an English wedding.

The ship was prepared for carrying us to Constantinople; our clothes were packed, and we ourselves were impatient for departure. But before I again put myself into the hands of God, and launched out into the deep, I determined once more to visit the moon-faced Bessy, and, notwithstanding the dirt which I had been made to eat by the Hoggs, to say my 'God be with you,' and ask forgiveness of my misdeeds.

The king of England had made us suitable presents on our departure, and as I thus became possessor of more than a hundred tomauns, I had been able to provide myself with several articles of dress so becoming, that I flattered myself

'Mirza' might be written before my name, instead of after it; and as far as my looks went, no one could say aught thereto. Therefore, with confidence, I appeared at the Hoggs' gate. It was early in the day, and to my surprise I saw a collection of carriages before the house, a circumstance not common in English life; and as if badges had been secured to protect the house from the evil eye, the servants and drivers of the said carriages wore very conspicuous white bunches of riband on their hats.

'What news may this be?' said I to the servant who opened the door.

'A wedding, sir,' said he. 'Miss is going to be married.'

At these words, although I had long suppressed my feelings on this subject, still the blood came into my face, and my heart turned upon me. I should immediately have retreated, but a woman looking out of the window, who it seems had recognised me,

and whom I soon knew was the mamma Hogg, screamed out, 'La! there is the prince, I declare!' and soon after I heard her running down the stairs. She invited me to come in, and said so many good-natured things, that I was without help, and followed her into the room of assembly. What shall I say? Here I found a collection of men and women, better dressed than usual; but, although their persons were gaily decked, their faces looked sad. Seated between her two sisters, and surrounded by other maidens, I discovered Bessy. They were dressed in white, and Bessy wore a long piece of laced linen pendant from her head, which the infidels pretend to call a veil, but which no more screens the face than an English lower garment conceals the shape of the legs. She, poor helpless! looked the saddest of the party. She no longer wore those looks of happiness which so much became her round and cheerful face; but

she was thin, care-worn, and her eyes were red with much weeping. I was astonished at this—a wedding in our country is the signal for merry-making; here it was plain that the first part of the ceremony is to look miserable.

After having been properly greeted by all present, I was soon let into the history of the marriage by the words without redemption which the mother threw at my ears.

'Well, prince,' said she, 'so you see we are going to marry our Bessy. She is a dear good girl; draws and sings beautifully, and will make a good wife, I dare say. She will be very rich; she's to keep her carriage, and is to be vastly happy.'

'*What for cry then, ma'am?*' said I.

'Oh! prince,' said she, 'that's only a girl's nonsense; she is sorry at parting with us. She can't have both us and her husband.'

'Where is her husband?' said I, natu-

rally expecting to see my former rival, the well-spurred and well-whiskered young 'no-beard.'

She told me, in answer, it was the custom that the parties should meet at church; and seeing that I was obliged to abandon all hope of getting her for my wife, I willingly acceded to her request to accompany the bride to church, in order to witness the ceremony.

I could not help going up to the disconsolate bride, to give her my best wishes for her happiness. I said, 'May God give you health, and increase of prosperity! May your house be plentiful; may your husband be handsome, and without jealousy; may your children keep clear of the evil eye; and whatever your heart can desire, whatever clothes you may wish to possess, and whatever dainties you may like to eat, may every thing be granted to you at the most fortunate hours!' Having said this, and determining to act well up

to the customs of the country, I acted as if I had been her relation, put a piece of gold in her hand, and would have kissed her between the eyes, had she not retreated quickly from me, and pushed me back just as my beard began to tickle her face.

'Well, prince! 'pon my word,' screamed the mamma, half in joke, half in earnest; 'well, whoever thought of that? La! Mr. Hogg, did you see that?' said she to her husband; 'I declare the prince there was a-going to kiss Mrs. Figby, as is to be.'

The father came up to me smiling and saying, 'I see you are a rare fellow after the girls! ha! prince!'

I looked very grave, and answered, '*Sir, custom of my country—give gold and kiss.*'

Upon this that daughter of Allah, Mary, came up to me with the bit of gold in her hand, and with great dignity said, 'My sister, sir, desires to return you this. Such

a present, at such a moment, is offensive.'

'*Custom of my country, ma'am*,' said I; '*gold bring good luck; gold make man happy. In Persia, king give gold with his own hand. 'Pon my honour, ma'am, very good custom.*'

When I had said this, they all appeared very sorry to have mistaken my intentions; and then they bestowed as many thanks as they were before disposed to show discontent. Bessy kept the piece of gold with much care, and said that she would remember me as long as she lived, hoping that the recollection of me would give her happiness; but it was easy to see that her heart was bursting into two bits as she spoke.

The moment for going to church now came, and the carriages were ordered to draw up.

I expected to see the bride go and kiss the hearth of her father's house, as is

usual in Persia; but she did nothing but arise and stand on her legs.

'*She not go and kiss fire-place?*' said I to the father.

'Kiss fire-place? prince!' said he; 'what should she do that for? No, no, we are not such kissers as that.' Then, thinking a little, he exclaimed, 'Oh! ay, I see how it is; you are fire-worshippers, I recollect, and do these things. No, no, prince, we are not fire-worshippers.'

I had scarcely time to reflect upon the extraordinary ignorance of the English with respect to us and our religion, when I found myself in a handsome carriage, whirling on at a rapid rate in the suite of one or two more towards the neighbouring church.

The whole party, men and women, then alighted; there was no music, no fireworks, no dancing on stilts, no throwing of apples. We walked into a small room, where we met another party who were the husband's relations. I looked about for the whiskered youth in vain. I asked some ques-

tions of the youngest sister concerning him, when she shook her head mysteriously, and turned away from me. I then inquired of the mother where the future husband was, when she exclaimed, 'La! prince, don't you know him? I 'll introduce him to you in a minute.' She immediately bustled through the crowd, crying out, 'Here, Figby! Mr. Figby, here! I want to introduce you to the Persian.' She then brought up to me a heavy, coarse-looking man, far different indeed from my former rival, and one whose face was not new to me. Who can it be? thought I, as Mrs. Hogg said, 'Mr. Figby, this is prince 'Hajji *Barber*.'' The man, with great self-sufficiency, answered as he proceeded to make the shake-hand ceremony with me, 'We are old acquaintance; we met at my friend Levi's.' Then I recollected that this was the *baqal*, the grocer, who had boasted of his wealth to us, and at whose ugly face Mohamed Beg and I had shaken the collars of our coats at the Jew's dinner.

The grief of the poor Bessy was now accounted for; all her sorrows were at once disclosed to me, as if I had read them in the book of her mind. It was evident that she loved the young 'no beard,' and that force alone had made her marry this ill-bred possessor of gold and sugar. My heart burned, and my soul became blood, at the reflection, and my friendship for the papa and the mamma Hogg turned back upon me.

These English after all, thought I, are a bad race. Their souls sleep in money. They marry, they separate, they fight, they make peace, for money. I'll burn old Hogg's fathers, by the beard of the blessed Mahomed, I will! And as I was going to upbraid him for sacrificing his beautiful child to this odious grocer, the procession began to move into the body of the church.

I listened as well as I could to the words of the *mollah*, but I could not follow him sufficiently well to determine what he said;

besides, I was taken up with the form and posture of the wretched Bessy, who was kneeling next to her future husband, and who required all the support of her sisters in a moment which seemed to try her greatest fortitude. There were some words to be pronounced, which it appears were to seal her fate for ever, and which evidently required much and long persuasion to entice from the bottom of her throat to the tip of her tongue; and when they had been pronounced, every body was thrown into dismay at seeing the unfortunate victim fall upon the breast of her eldest sister in a swoon.

The truth is that upon seeing this, my heart turned upside down. Although I had been witness to many a scene of misery in my own country, yet let me say it, in England it appeared to me totally unnatural and misplaced. We had now been so long absent from Persia, where acts of violence are as common as any of the daily occurrences of life, that I

was not prepared for what now had taken place before my eyes, and devoting, in my own mind, Hoggs, grocers, and Jews to the lowest *jehanum*, I put my cap on one side, pulled up my whiskers, and left the church with a fierce look, without saying one word to any of the assembled party. I believe, in my rage, I spit as I left the infidel sanctuary.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The ambassador embarks his servants for Constantinople.—Hajji Baba describes their voyage thither.

Mirza Firouz having determined to deprive himself of the use of one of his slaves, placed the Circassian in the hands of Mahboob; and every thing being now ready for departure, we bid adieu to London, and turned our faces towards Tehran. As a parting gift from the Franks, we were allowed each of us to take possession of our sheets and bed curtains, upon which we had long fixed our eyes as excellent materials for cutting up into sashes for our waists. We then received the parting words usual on such occasions from the ambassador; we mutually forgave each other; and having kissed the English footmen, and cried over the maids, we got

into coaches, and soon after were installed in the ship provided for us.

Our departure from England was not so brilliant as our arrival; and it was certain that whatever our ambassador might be, neither of us were treated as the representatives of shahs. On the contrary, we were received on board as merchandize. Our persons and baggage having been duly counted and numbered, we were registered on bits of paper, which were signed by the captain, who thus bound himself to deliver us over, dead or alive, to the Persian agent at Constantinople.

The person who took charge of us, and who was called the captain, was nothing better than one of our own *nakhodas*. He was a coarse, hard-featured man, with a face as weather-beaten as any Turcoman, and who knew no more of our manners or of our country, than he did of the delights of paradise. For our daily food he had provided as much beef, fresh as well as salted, as would feed the whole of Mazan-

deran; of fowls a few, and of rice scarcely any. Luckily a great part of the stock of rice which we had brought with us from Persia was still untouched, and of that we had a store. He gave us each a hole to sleep in; and to the Circassian he assigned a harem, a small separate room, where she might creep in and out at pleasure.

The moment we left the house, she, poor unfortunate, resumed all her natural flow of spirits. Confined as she had so long been in one room, she had become almost as inanimate as the curtains or chairs which formed its furniture; but now restored to air, and to the sight of human beings, she became almost frantic with joy, and her brain jumped about in unceasing rapture. When it was known that she was contained in the ship, and before we weighed anchor, we were surrounded by boats full of prying infidels to look at her. We even suspected that our captain might have received a little 'manure' in his hand, to allow one or two men, without shame,

to come among us with books in their hands, to draw or write down all they saw; but as he found us protected by precautions which the mehmandar had taken to prevent our being molested, he very soon was obliged to read his contract over again, and to raise his canvas to the winds.

I will pass over all that we suffered on board this accursed vessel, at the hands of this infidel without a soul and without compassion. It is sufficient to say, that had it not been for our full belief in predestination, and the conviction that the miseries which we endured had been decreed to us since the beginning of all things, we should have eaten more grief during this our voyage than is served up to the whole body of true believers in the regions of Islam in one year. Allah! Allah! what did we not eat? Grief, storm, tempest, wind, salt-water, even blows from the bankrupt captain; all this we devoured, and yet when we had reached our destination, safe and sound, we returned to our old

habits and our old ways, as if the spunge of oblivion had been taken up by the hand of fate, and had wiped from our memories whatever we had endured.

I must, however, say that our miseries were greatly alleviated by the conduct of the Circassian maid. She met every thing with cheerfulness; and in moments of real danger, when the storm hung over us, when we were thrown to and fro by the sea, and when we apprehended that every moment would be our last, she armed us with a courage which appeared supernatural, and, raising our drooping spirits, reminded us ever and anon that the minarets and cupolas of Constantinople would soon be in sight, and that every moment was taking us a step nearer to our homes and our families. A woman of the Franks could not have done more than she did; and indeed, when fine weather came, and the heavens were quiet, and prosperity again shone upon us, she was well requited by the repeated exclamations of *Mashal-*

lah! and *Barikallah!* which her heroic conduct extorted from us.

And indeed at length the happy moment came; the minarets appeared in sight; we all crowded on the deck to see the glorious view. Even the ugly English captain looked handsome on that day; for then, and then only, did we see the sunshine of a smile break through his brow of storm. And when we cast anchor in face of the golden palaces, the arched mosques, the groves of cypresses, the interminable city, covering hill after hill with every description of tenement, we sighed forth our thanks to Allah, our saviour and deliverer, with a fervour that can only be known by those who, having been in adversity, at length reach the haven of prosperity.

Our first impulse was to rush on shore, and to leave our prison and our jailer. All my adventures at Constantinople came back to my recollection as if they had only happened yesterday, as we set our foot on the dry land; and being a good guide

through its intricate streets, I soon found my way to the house of the shah's agent. Here we expended our first breath narrating our adventures, and asking innumerable questions concerning our friends and families in Persia. We spoke in bitterness of the captain of our ship. Mohamed Beg vowed that he had been more severely polluted by what he had there encountered, than by all he had undergone since our previous residence amongst the infidels. He scarcely ever went on deck but he encountered the unclean beast walking about in open defiance of us. Its flesh was eaten in every corner; and had it not been for our united resistance, it would have been served up to us. Then Aga Beg, the master of the horse, swore by the beard of the Prophet, that for want of a horse he had almost become an animal himself; and no sooner had he reached the agent's house than, seizing the first steed which came to hand, he mounted it, and rode backwards and forwards in the street, with a violence which

made the Turks themselves believe he was possessed by all the madness of a Frank.

I bestirred myself to provide the Circassian with a proper lodging, and to get our effects on shore; and then went to the house of the English elchi to deliver our letters. On my road I met the captain of our ship, who, seeing me bound to the house of his superiors, and of his men in authority, presented the front of humility to my wondering eyes, and offered to conciliate me with the hand of friendship; but he did not succeed in laughing at my beard; I passed on, leaving him with his mouth open to digest the dirt which he had been eating for the last two months.

I did not find that I met with the same favourable reception among the English at Constantinople as we were accustomed to receive from their countrymen in England. It is evident, that owing to the immense quantity of beards in the Turkish capital, ours were looked upon as of less consequence than house-brooms.

No one here offered to shake hands and talk fine weather. They deemed all the purposes of civility and conversation were answered if they put a long pipe in our hands. As we approached my own country I began to find the truth of the well-known saying, 'In the *maidan*, or the public walk, at the sight of thy handsome cloak every one makes way, and saith, '*Mashallah!*' but at home every child can count the holes and darns which it covereth.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Hajji and his companions reach Tehran.—He has an audience of the shah, and is clothed with honour.—Conclusion of his adventures.

HAVING hired our mules, and completed all the preparations for the journey, in the course of a few days we were well advanced on the road to our own country, some of us with heads touching the sky for joy, others with noses in the dust with dejection.

Nothing occurred on the journey worth relating, excepting the meeting with a Frank, who was returning to his country from the gate of the Asylum of the Universe. Dilferîb, who had been placed under the protection of a Persian *catirji*, or mule-driver, on seeing the infidel, uttered an exclamation of delight, such as no woman ever made even upon meeting her father or her uncle. This so much surprised her con-

ductor, that without more ado he inflicted upon her two or three stripes so violent as to cause her to roar out with excess of pain. We, who really loved her as a sister, immediately took her part, and would have sacrificed the mule-driver to our anger, had we not been stopped by the recollection that our days of freedom were now gone, that we were among Mahomedans, and that to advocate the cause of liberty in woman would only be paving the road to our own slavery and disgrace. This was one of the strongest instances in which we discovered the excellence of a christian country over our own. However, as we returned to our old habits, the impression which we had received in foreign lands daily became fainter, and at length we began to think that the mule-driver might be in the right, and Dilferîb wrong.

As we crawled along the stony tracks of Turkey, each on our jaded mule, how often did we not compare our present rate and

mode of travelling to the extraordinary things which we had seen in England!

'In truth,' did Mohamed Beg exclaim occasionally, 'those *khoneh kharab*, those bankrupt infidels, have other merits besides that of possessing beer! *Mashallah! Mashallah!* when shall we ever see those miraculous coaches again? And when shall we again sleep in a Frank caravanserai? Every time I stretch myself upon a stone-floor, I dream of the down-beds, and the soft cushions of those sons and daughters of Isau.'

By expatiating upon things unknown to the inhabitants of the regions we travelled through, we increased the reputation which our countrymen already enjoy of their great powers of misrepresentation; and in truth, so contemptible did our ignorant and prejudiced auditors appear in our eyes, that at length we scarcely deigned to hold converse with them.

At Arz Rûm we visited the pacha, who had not forgotten our ambassador and his

crop-eared running footman. At Tabriz we rubbed our foreheads against the threshold of the exalted deputy of the state, the heir to the throne, who asked questions which convinced us, were he to have seen what we had seen, the garden of his mind would have brought forth fruits so beneficial, that his government would soon have assumed the appearance of the fair countries we had left.

I must not omit to mention, that, a few days after leaving Arz Rûm, we were met by a party of Cûrds, mounted upon magnificent horses, and who seemed well disposed to despoil us of the few things of value which we had brought with us from Frangistan. They were about insisting upon the inspection of our baggage, when we were overtaken by a detachment of armed Turks, servants of the pacha of Kars, who immediately took our part, but in so violent a manner that a fray ensued. I was the responsible person in charge of the letters, and other things of consequence,

from the ambassador and the English government to the shah, and therefore I felt myself called upon to interfere. I was valiantly throwing many words at the Cûrds, sword in hand, when, by a sudden turn, one of our opponents threw his horse's tail into my face, and, by another trick, made him kick up so well to the mark, that I received a blow on my mouth, which sent three of my front teeth down my throat, accompanied by a very ornamental bit of my mustache. Such a misfortune, I felt, would do me incalculable mischief; for it would probably deprive me of the power of making use of that tongue and of those wits with which I intended to procure the protection and increase of the condescension of the king of kings towards myself. We were without help, and having by the grace of God got rid of the Cûrds, I wrapped my face and beard round with a shawl, and in this pitiful state entered Tabriz. Mohamed Beg undertook to an-

swer the inquiries of our illustrious prince, whilst I reserved myself to meet those of the shah; for I hoped, by the time that my eyes should be blessed with the sight of the snowy Demawend, my face would be in speaking order.

And indeed so it proved, for on the day of our arrival at Tehran, my whisker was restored to its former beauty, and the only loss which I sustained from our untoward adventure was that of my teeth.

We were met by our friends even before we had left the environs of Caraj, so anxious were they to see us. I had no one to welcome me, saving two of my former associates in the chief executioner's department; but I determined to keep up my dignity, and to avow my intention, by the tone of my manners and language, never again to be ranked among the *alishoons*. Before we had entered the city, a servant from the harem of our late chief, Mirza Firouz, took possession of our much-re-

gretted Dilferib: from that hour we lost sight of her, and she became as dead to us as if she never had existed.

I proceeded straightway to the house of the grand vizier, and finding that he was at his post at the royal gate, I followed him thither, and with my boots on, overwhelmed as I was with the dust and dirt of the journey, I presented my letters, and stood before him.

The present minister had been no friend of my former patron, therefore he allowed me to stand a few minutes before he invited me into the apartment where he was seated; at length, having inspected one or two of the letters, he said, '*Khosh amedeed*, you are welcome,' ordered me into the room, and condescended to give me a convenient place on the *nummud**.

I found many of my acquaintance here assembled, and was soon greeted with many compliments. 'Your place has long been

* The thick felt which borders a Persian room.

empty, and our eyes are enlightened,' were expressions poured over me in profusion; and after the grand vizier had risen to report my arrival to the shah, and to lay the letters, of which I was the bearer, before him, numerous were the questions with which I was assailed. 'What sort of a place is Frangistan?' said one. 'Praise be to Allah!' said another: 'you, O Hajji! must have seen beautiful women.' An old austere mollah in a corner mumbled out, 'Curses on their beards! the infidels are impure, from beginning to the end.'

'Is it true,' said another man of the law, 'that their women are without shame, and that their men never used the prescribed lustrations after certain necessities?'

'What words are these?' exclaimed a scribe. 'They are of the race of Isau; it is evident that they are all polluted, and altogether unprofitable.'

'But they have their *Evangîl*,' said

a merchant from Bassorah, 'and that is something after all; there are wonderful things in that book.'

'It is more contemptible than the egg left by the ostrich in the desert,' retorted the old priest. 'What is it compared to our blessed Koran?'

I could not help remarking, 'You would soon find, O mollah! had you been amongst the Franks, that instead of looking upon the Christian's Bible with contempt, you would respect it as the first of books, judging it by the wonderful fruits which it produces.'

I saw that I acquired no popularity by this speech, particularly when all the answer which I got in return was—

'Yes! a gnat may have marrow, and a wing is of consequence to the fly.'

By this time the vizier had announced my arrival to the shah, and a *ferash* of the private apartments stepped into the crowded place where we were seated, and,

with a tone of authority, said to me, 'The shah wants you.'

Upon this I rose, and collecting my senses around me, as well as I was able, followed the man of blows, keeping my cloak respectfully before me, in order to cover my body. I endeavoured to call to my recollection all those modes of respect and veneration, which a residence among the Franks had in a great measure obliterated, in order that I might use the becoming form of words in addressing my royal master; and which I well knew were necessary to secure to myself a comfortable possession of my ears.

As I dipped my head in passing the low door which leads into the court of the *khelwet*, or private apartments, I perceived the head and shoulders of the king of kings just apparent above the ledge of the open window at which he was seated, and then made as low an inclination as I could without touching the ground.

I was then walked through different avenues of trees, until I reached a spot within speaking distance of his majesty, where the *ferash* ordered me to stop; when the king perceived me, and after a dignified pause, he cried out, 'Come forwards;' and then, with trepidation, I stepped onwards in my boots, for such is the etiquette; and when I had got to the brink of a basin of water, close under the royal window, I knelt down and kissed the ground.

'Are you Hajji Baba?' said the shah.

I made a low bow.

'You are welcome.'

I made another bow.

'Have you brought any *peish-kesh*, any present for the *Shahin-Shah?*' said his majesty, smiling.

'My soul is both your sacrifice and your *peish-kesh*,' said I. 'Whatever your slave possesses is the shah's. I have brought twenty pieces of Frank gold to be laid at the foot of the throne.' Upon which, drawing the money from my bosom, being

a part of that which I had brought from England, I placed it on a gold salver brought to me by the ferash, who laid it before the king.

'Hajji Baba is a good servant,' said the king to the vizier. 'He has returned with a white face; he holds the countenance of the shah as of some value.'

'Yes, yes,' said the grand vizier, 'where-ever the royal condescension alights, there white faces are to be found.'

Upon this a *kalián* was brought to the shah, who having refreshed himself with a long whiff, deliberately looked upon me a while, and said, 'Well, Hajji, so you have seen Frangistan—what sort of a place is it?'

'Owing to the condescension of the Asylum of the Universe,' said I, 'it is not a bad place.'

'How is it compared to Persia?' said the king.

'As I am your sacrifice,' said I, 'there can be no comparison.'

'Well, well,' said his majesty, 'every country must have its pleasures; but, in truth, what is there in the world like our Irân? eh, Mirza!' turning to his vizier, and quoting these well-known lines of Hafiz, which begin with

> 'Joy to Shiraz' charming plain,
> Where smiling peace and plenty reign!'

'*Ai Barikallah!* oh beautiful!' cried the vizier, 'beautiful!'—'But,' said the statesman, 'Hafiz, whose dog was he, compared with what our own king of kings has said and sung*?'

'You do not say ill,' said his majesty, stroking down his beard. 'We have also made our couplets; but, in truth, that unsainted poet was a wit of whom we shall never more see the like. He was a Shirazi, and worthy to be native of such a place.' Then turning to me, he said, 'Have the Franks any poets?'

* Fath Ali Shah is himself a poet of some eminence.

'May I be your sacrifice,' said I, 'they have; but to say that they approach to either Hafiz or Saadi, may God forgive me for thinking so!'

'But they have no nightingales,' said the king; 'say that, I will believe you.'

'They have none,' said I, 'but of dogs they have abundance.'

The shah was pleased at my attempt to be witty, and taking me up with a loud laugh, he was pleased to exclaim, 'Well you said, Hajji, by the soul of the shah! and good dog poets I dare say they make.'

Upon which the vizier exclaimed, '*Mashallah!* the wit of the king is not to be mistaken; as to that we must cry, trust in Heaven!'

'So they have poets!' said his majesty; 'what else have they got? It is said that their women are good, is that true?'

'Of that there is no doubt,' said I; 'they would even be worthy, so thinks your slave, of standing before the shah himself.'

'Is it so?' said he. 'We have them here of all nations, Circassians, Georgians, Armenians, Jewesses; we want a Frank woman to be complete. Why did you not bring the shah a present of one, eh, Hajji? By the shah's beard, you would have found favour in our sight had you done so.'

'What am I to say, O king of kings? Your slave is in fault. Such was the number I saw, that I could not find one in my mind sufficiently of merit; but if your majesty would order your ambassador, who is still in England, perhaps he might be able to obey your majesty's commands.'

'You do not say wrong,' said the king. 'We want a Frank woman.' Then turning to the vizier, he said, 'What else was it that we wanted from that country? Is it now in your recollection?'

'May I be your sacrifice,' said the vizier; 'your slave thinks it was a spying-glass.'

'True, true,' answered the shah, recol-

lecting himself; 'it was a spying-glass; a miraculous spying-glass. Is it true,' said he to me, with some hesitation, 'is it true that they make a spying-glass in that country which can look over a mountain? Is such a thing really made?'

'Since your majesty says so,' said I, 'it must be so; but, in truth, it was not my good luck to meet with it. But, as I am your sacrifice, may it please your majesty, I have seen things among the Franks equally astonishing; and, therefore, there is no reason that it should not exist.'

'What things did you see? Speak boldly.'

'I have seen a ship,' said I, 'going against a fierce wind, with the same velocity as a horse, and that by the vapour which rises from boiling water.'

'' Hajji,' said the king, after a stare and a thought, 'say no lies here. After all, we are a king. Although you are a traveller, and have been to the Franks, yet a lie is a lie, come from whence it may.'

My tongue almost became constipated at this reproof; but taking courage, I continued with vehemence:—'By the salt of the king, may my head be struck off this moment—I am your sacrifice—as I live, I swear that such is the case, and if there be a Frank here, and he be a man, he will confirm my words.'

'Say it again,' answered the king, softened by my earnestness. 'What vapour could ever be strong enough to perform such a miracle?'

I then explained what I knew of a steam-engine, and how it acted upon the wheels of a ship.

'But to produce steam enough for such a purpose,' said his majesty, 'they must have on board the father of all kettles*, grandfather, and great-grandfather, to

* *Abu-al-Adham*, the father of kettles; so the Arabians call the large caldron in which, on occasions of great hospitality, they dress a sheep whole.

boot; large enough to boil a camel, much less a sheep.'

'Camels, your majesty!' exclaimed I, 'large enough to dress a string of camels!'

'Wonderful, wonderful!' exclaimed the shah, in deep thought; 'well, after this, there is no doubt that they can make a spying-glass that looks over the mountain. Order some to be sent immediately,' said he to the vizier.

'By my eyes!' said the minister, calmly and obsequiously.

'What other thing did you see, Hajji?' said his majesty to me; 'but open your eyes—recollect—no falsehoods—or otherwise, by the shah's beard! we are without compassion.'

'Upon my eyes be it!' said I. 'Many are the miracles which, owing to the condescension of the king of kings, it has been your slave's good fortune to see. Every night, amongst the Franks, magicians, with lighted torches, run about the streets, and where there is nothing to be seen for

lighting, neither candle, lamp, wood, or wick, they produce an instantaneous light, which burns all the night through.'

'What news is this?' said the king. 'Excepting at Badkoo, which every one knows is a place of miracles, and where a vapour comes to the earth's surface which ignites, I have never heard of this which you relate.'

'I well recollect now,' answered I, 'as I am your sacrifice, that a mercantile infidel assured me that England could manufacture a sacred flame, far purer than the natural fire which issues from the ground at Badkoo, and which is so necessary for the temples of the Guebres and Parsees, and export it at a cheaper rate than any fire of the sort which can be procured either at Yezd, Surat, or Bombay.'

'Is it so?' said the shah. 'I have always heard that the English were great merchants, and could manufacture broad cloth; but I never yet heard that they could manufacture a sacred fire.'

'By the head of the king I swear,' said I, 'that this is true; and if your majesty should doubt the words of your slave, order your ambassador to bring a box full from England, and it will reach the foot of your throne unhurt, even should it blow more violent tempests of wind than those which your humble slave encountered on the seas.'

'So you encountered great tempests?' said the shah. 'Say on, Hajji; every thing you have on your heart, say on.'

'Yes, may it please your majesty,' said I, with a ready wit which flashed over my mind like lightning, 'one tempest we encountered on our passage from England to Constantinople so great, that venturing to look overboard to see how fast we were going for the good of your majesty's service, and happening to leave my mouth open, a fierce wind entered, and blew three of your slave's teeth down his throat.' Upon this I opened my mouth, and showed the damage which my jaw had sustained from the kick of the Cûrdish horse.

'Are there such winds, indeed?' asked the shah. 'In truth they rush down with violence enough from the neighbouring heights of Albors, sufficiently strong to blow the beards from off our chins; but the existence of such a wind as you describe has never yet reached our understanding.'

Happy was I to have had the wit to turn my misfortune to such an advantage, for it was plain that my narrative had much interested the royal breast, and I trusted to my ingenuity to turn all my real or pretended sufferings in my travels to still greater advantage, and, if possible, to secure for myself some permanent situation about the court. I then entered into a detail of our journey; spoke of our privations, the impurities we had encountered, the indignities to which we were exposed, and of our hair-breadth escapes from shipwrecks, pirates, and monsters of the deep, which so worked upon the imagination of our beloved shah, that with that goodness of heart for which he is so celebrated, he

ordered that I should immediately be invested with a dress of honour.

What shall I say more? I was dismissed from the royal presence with my head touching the skies; the condescending words of the Asylum of the Universe had sunk deep into my heart. I was treated with respect by every body, owing to the favourable reception I had met with; and perhaps all reasonable persons would say that I could have nothing more to wish for. But shall I be forgiven when I declare that still I had something to wish for? shall I proclaim the vanities of my inmost thoughts? Let me say it then, I longed to be a khan. I longed to be paraded through the town for three days, with a firman stuck in my cap. I repeated the title so often to myself that I thought I could in justice demand it. Mirza Hajji Baba Khan sounded so well, so much as a thing which ought to be, that I could no longer doubt such a favour ever could be refused. I then began quietly to give

hints of my expectations; to say that I had great hopes of their completion; and that in fact the shah himself, whether in earnest, or by mistake, instead of calling me mirza, had in fact called me khan.

But, as I said before, the grand vizier was no friend of mine, and he lent but a deaf ear to what was so openly spoken of by every body at court. He felt that if I were to be made a khan, what more could be done for the ambassador himself, who was his relation by marriage, when he returned from his embassy? Besides, how could he lend his hand to advance one who was the creature of his bitterest enemy, the late prime minister?

Notwithstanding my disappointment, still I lived in hope. In the meanwhile I consoled myself with the possession of the money which I had buried at my departure, and which I had found untouched. I pass my days in exciting the wonder of my countrymen by the relation of my adventures. I am privileged to stand before

the king. And who knows? time, opportunity, and my tongue, will not be wanting to help me in the accomplishment of my wishes, and in filling up the measure of my ambition. And now, gentle reader, Hajji Baba kisses your feet, seeks protection at the skirt of your coat, and hopes that your shadow may never be less.

THE END.

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